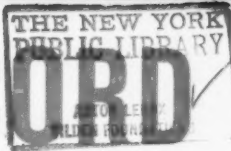


MAY 18 1960

The American

RECORD GUIDE



MAY 1960



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CONTENTS

BEGINNING
ON PAGE:

The New "Soria Series"—	
"Don Quixote"	
<i>By Shirley Fleming</i>	694
Berlioz: Requiem	
<i>By C. J. Luten</i>	696
"La Voix humaine"	
<i>By Philip L. Miller</i>	703
The American Society Presents	
"Concerts in the Home"	
<i>By Herbert Glass</i>	700
Introducing "Words Only"	
<i>By Paul Kresh</i>	706
Walcha on the Harpsichord.....	712
Four Works for Winds.....	714
From Artia, Experimental Enesco...	726
Zaremba—Rare and Intoxicating...	732
Reiner's Mahler Fourth	
<i>By Jack Diether</i>	734
History of Music in Sound	
(HOMIS), Volume VIII	
<i>By Alan Rich</i>	742
Five French Literary Giants	
<i>By Stephen Potter</i>	757

DEPARTMENTS

From The Editor.....	699
Spoken Word.....	706
Other Reviews (Mono & Stereo)...	710
Sound Ideas.....	744
Folk Music.....	748
The Third Ear.....	750
Da Capo.....	753
Book Reviews.....	omitted this month
Unlikely Corners.....	759
Stereotape Reviews.....	762
The Month's Jazz.....	766
Readers' Exchange.....	768
SUBSCRIPTION COUPONS.....	765

ON THE COVER: Fritz Reiner, who latest RCA Victor recordings with his Chicago Symphony Orchestra are reviewed on pages 694 and 734

DON QUIXOTE

It is all in the score; Reiner
had only to uncover it. . .



Don Quixote and Sancho Panza—Drawing by Pablo Picasso

IT IS always easy for people who don't conduct orchestras to tell those who *do* how to do it. In the case of *Don Quixote*, probably one of the most vivid orchestral scores ever written, the temptation to give the conductor a quick run-down of qualifications necessary to handle the music is particularly strong, and it requires very little rumination on the part of the non-conductor for him to capitulate gracefully and start laying down the law. A sense of humor, we may say (without further ado), and of course a sense of rhythm; and with this work especially, among all the Strauss tone poems, a literary turn of imagination. Add to these a keen ear for individual parts, which is the essence of the work, and then let us confront Fritz Reiner with our rudimentary list, and take stock of the present recording.

The simple truth is, that not only is Reiner abundantly gifted in all our requirements but he reminds us of another, because he himself makes so much of it: the great view of climaxes, seen from afar across innumerable details and small detours and moments of excitement, and approached steadily and surely with a magnificent control of dynamics and a grand abandon when the moment comes. There is one in the introduction, and of course one in the windmill "scene"; I think the greatest of all is in Variation III, when the orchestra unfolds in its full glory and the cellos simply take your breath away. It is all in the score, to be sure, and Reiner had only to uncover it. But that is a sizable "only", and even the Toscanini version, it seems to me, is less impressive

in this respect. (The splendid recorded sound is on Reiner's side, naturally, but it is not the engineers who molded those twelve or so pages of the score!)

A comparison with the Toscanini, incidentally, sheds an interesting light on Reiner's foresight in preparing for his climaxes. Where Toscanini begins the work in a brisker and more incisive tone, Reiner starts out more deliberately and at first appearances more prosaically. Only in looking back from the peaks which follow do we have a clear view of the proportions which Reiner intended all along. And we cannot leave the subject of the big moments in this work without mentioning Variation VII, in which the good Don and his squire are borne aloft astride their magic wooden horse: the effect is positively Cinematic, and the wind machine is guaranteed to blow your hat right off your head.

Without a good solo cello and solo viola—a crucial addition to the list of Quixote prerequisites—much would be lost in this score. Janigro and Milton Preves (who is Chicago's regular principal violist) play boldly and incisively, and Janigro in particular, whose part offers him the chance, has some really noble moments. And the orchestra outdoes itself to a man—including the brass, which finds itself in positions as exposed as any brass player will ever hope to be.

The Soria packaging lives up to these high standards. (Or is it the other way round?) Color prints by Skira of Daumier and Dali are set off by black-and-whites of Goya and Picasso, and in his notes Walter Starkie supplements the many quotations from Cervantes with a discussion of the place of the book itself in Spanish literature and a first-hand view of Don Quixote's own path through the countryside of Spain.

The only thing left for the listener is a trip to Spain itself.

R. STRAUSS: *Don Quixote*; Antonio Janigro (solo cello); Milton Preves (solo viola); Chicago Symphony conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor, Soria Series set LS-2384, \$6.98, or Stereo LSS-2384, \$7.98.

BERLIOZ: REQUIEM

... as "seen" by Fantin-Latour



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By C. J. LUTEN

BERLIOZ was a sincere man—a sincere Frenchman. He was sincere about music, sincere about the drama. Never a pious man, he was nevertheless sincere about the Requiem service. As Jacques Barzun has noted: "It had apparently not occurred to anyone but Berlioz to take it seriously, to conjure up on that occasion a Day of Judgement, to fear, tremble, pray, hope, and be contrite. . . . He paid heed to the liturgy, the religious habits of compatriots and the special occasion."

The occasion for which Berlioz conceived his Requiem was a celebration for those fallen in the revolution of 1830. Its mood was expected to be sad, solemn, martial—the tradition for mass gatherings at that time assuming the union of religion with daily life. The place designated for this special occasion was the Chapel of St. Louis at the Invalides, a very large, domed area which Berlioz calculated would require 190 instrumentalists and 210 voices if every person present was to hear *pianissimo* passages with ease.

It is an acoustical phenomenon that, depending on the room, the larger the body of strings the smoother the *pianissimo*. So much attention has been called to Berlioz's "monstrous" forces for the Requiem that few have bothered to dis-

cover why they were necessary. The Requiem is, by any standards, marvelously well proportioned and in only two out of ten numbers are the full forces unleashed. The character of the entire composition has often been misjudged. It has been castigated as overwrought, hectic, unreligious. The facts are that only one whole number and parts of two others out of ten can be called violent by any stretch of the imagination.

That Berlioz's Requiem is outstandingly original and that it was perfectly suited to its purpose are incontrovertible. That it is, moreover, a sincere and profound elaboration of the liturgy seems to me equally undeniable. But the old habits of thought—in this case, parroting of the musicological lore that the Berlioz Requiem is oversized and an illegitimate expression of faith—are rather durable, and I expect to encounter them again in the press and on the street the next time I hear this music in New York.

The performance at hand is directed by one who clearly understands and loves the work. It is well conceived as tonal architecture appropriate to the score. It is not, however, as well proportioned as it might be from the expressive point of view. Some of the quiet sections show less than perfect control and these have a quality of tenseness that seems to me at odds with the strong, even flow required. The *Quid sum miser* and the superb *Offertorium*, which Robert Schumann so admired, are cases in point. The awe-provoking *Tuba mirum* and the astonishing *Lacrymosa*, on the other hand, could hardly be more

BERLIOZ: *Requiem Mass*; Boston Symphony Orchestra and New England Conservatory Chorus conducted by Charles Munch, with Leopold Simoneau (tenor). RCA Victor Soria Series set LD-6077, four sides, \$11.96, or Stereo LDS-6077, \$13.98.



forceful or grand. Although the ensemble is untidy in a few other places, the chorus and instrumentalists are here risen to full heights of their capabilities and the result is something to make the listener limp with wonder.

Credit for no small part of this impression is the work of the RCA Victor engineering team. In the face of such a musical complex, the dynamic span and small amount of distortion on these discs establishes new standards for the recording art. The sonics are everywhere rich

and full; the balances, except for some short-changing of the sound of the violins, are attractive.

This is the latest addition to the de luxe Soria Series; accordingly, accompanying the records is a handsomely got up, Skira-printed booklet which contains an essay by John Burk, text and translations, a number of full-color prints of distinguished, mainly 15th-century paintings, and photographs taken during the recording session. Housing all this is an unusually sturdy slipcase.

Above, the Cour d'Honneur of Les Invalides as shown in an eighteenth-century etching by Jean Rigaud. It was there that Charles Munch conducted the Berlioz Requiem on the 1937 centenary of the first performance. (Metropolitan Museum of Art) Below, the recording session in Symphony Hall, Boston. The brass were deployed on either side of the second balcony.



FROM THE EDITOR:

A NOTE of caution to anyone out there who has been procrastinating on *The World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music*, which we have been making available to subscribers as a special service these many months. The word from London is that inventories are running low, especially on the first of the three volumes (which comprises the original work and Supplement One bound together). No book or books in the English language can challenge the "WERM" for usefulness to record collectors, and at \$12.50 (as compared to \$51.75 list value) it is a steal. Notwithstanding the March, 1956, cut-off, these six shelf inches of awesome scholarship constitute the most valuable hard-cover material in my reference library, and I am chagrined to hear that the set will soon go out of print (although sequels will be forthcoming, we are assured). So first come, first served, and if your order comes in after the stock is exhausted please remember this warning. For further details see the inside back cover. . . I am pleased to announce that a special section will be added next month to accommodate a portfolio of historic photographs by Carl Van Vechten, doyen of American critics and camera artist extraordinary. . . Vox begs to advise that its Gli Accademici di Milano recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, reviewed and recommended last month, is now priced at \$1.98 (\$2.98 in stereo), not \$4.98 as we had indicated. The careful collector is commended to this new "Thriftmaster" series (identified by the prefix GBY), to which many excellent discs in the Vox catalogue lately have been transferred. For our part, we shall try to keep abreast of all the price changes. . . Not all of them are downward, incidentally; lest economy-minded collectors infer bargain days ahead I should report that at least one label is about to raise its prices substantially. . . If all goes as planned we can expect big things from Artia, which has completed arrangements for the American release of innumerable fascinating items in the 2,500-entry cata-

logue of the Soviet combine so impressively transliterated as Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga. The label will be known here rather more succinctly as "MK", and as evidence of the delights to come you should know that the initial (September) release will include just for instance Sviatoslav Richter's recording of the Mussorgsky *Pictures* and *echt*-complete performances (presumably from the Bolshoi) of *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. May we dare to hope at last for an uncut *Raymonda*? I am interested in a number of the other ballet scores from the standard Bolshoi repertory—*The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, *Flames of Paris*, *Shurale*, *Laurencia*, *Red Sails*, and above all the *Don Quixote* music that is still preserved as Minkus wrote it for Petipa nearly a century ago. We shall see. In any event the best of luck to J. Jay Frankel and Peter Sutro, who flew to Moscow to negotiate this important cultural exchange. . . And I should add that we are not ungrateful to Monitor in particular for facilitating the already sizable representation of Soviet recordings in the Schwann listings. I gather that this label has been making a lot of records right here and is about to create a new "brand image", but let no one detract from Monitor's splendid spadework in cultural exchange. . . Speaking of Schwann reminds me to call your attention to the new "Artist Listing", which is due out momentarily. I have practically worn out my copy of the 1958 edition, and any serious collector who does not order a copy of the 1960 one will be sorry because the supply is sure to be exhausted shortly after publication. . . I hear that another "*Götterdämmerung*" is on the way. . . A reliable source tells me that a recording of Virgil Thomson's wondrous opera about Susan B. Anthony, "*The Mother of Us All*", is available for release if enough firm orders are received. If all those who have *not* previously indicated their desire will please drop me a post card, maybe we can get some action on this worthy project. —J.L.

The first recordings in a 'very fine' new series

By HERBERT GLASS

I SHALL discuss this omnibus release in numerical order. One of the initial six records, "Keyboard Music of the French Court", will be reviewed separately.

1001: The excitement on this record is not furnished by the unfamiliar Handel, but rather by the oft-recorded, not-seldom-performed Vivaldi. Baron and Saidenberg combine for a reading which should make their competitors hang their heads in shame. Baron presents us with all the rich ornamentation of the solo part, a practice inimical to all the stylistic concepts of I Musici's soloist, Gastone Tasinari. Baron's playing penetrates far more deeply into the music as well. Saidenberg keeps things moving at a lively, driving pace. This performance shows the kind of sharply inflected playing that

is vital to a really exciting interpretation and which one seldom encounters from I Musici. Baron *may* have his equals in this music; I have not heard them. The sound on this section of the record is perfect, and precisely in keeping with the performers' view of what is being played. I Musici has its orchestra a few acoustical miles behind the soloist. As a result we get none of the interplay between flute and solo violin or harpsichord. The orchestral playing here is devoid of the slickness of I Musici's, although I am certain that Saidenberg's are capable of it when so bidden. Fortunately, Saidenberg has decided not to polish the life out of the music. What we hear instead is the spontaneity of a concert performance (adequately rehearsed, of course) rather than the oily perfection

The American Society Presents "Concerts-in-the-Home" from Carnegie Recital Hall under the direction of Daniel Saidenberg. Available individually at \$4.98 (mono) or \$5.98 (stereo) or as boxed set, including also No. 1006, to be reviewed by I. K., at \$29.88 (mono) or \$35.88 (stereo).

▼
HANDEL: *Concerto in F, No. 3 for Two Wind Choirs and Strings*; **VIVALDI:** *Flute Concerto in D, Op. 10, No. 3 ("Il Cardellino")*; **GEMINIANI:** *Concerto Grosso in C minor, Op. 2, No. 2*; Samuel Baron (flute—in Vivaldi only); Saidenberg Little Symphony conducted by Daniel Saidenberg. Mono AS-1001; Stereo SAS-1001.

TELEMANN: *Don Quixote Suite*; **HANDEL:** *Oboe Concerto in G minor; Largo for Two Horns and Strings; Arias Nos. 1 & 2 for Winds*; Soloists—Harry Shulman (oboe); Samuel Baron (flute); Richard Dunn and James Buffington (horns); Saidenberg Little Symphony conducted by Daniel Saidenberg. Mono

AS-1002; Stereo SAS-1002.

PURCELL: *The Gordian Knot Untied: Suites Nos. 1 & 2*; **PERGOLESI:** *Trio Sonata in G minor*; **BOYCE:** *Symphony No. 8 in D minor*; **TELEMANN:** *Trio Sonata in C*; Saidenberg Little Symphony conducted by Daniel Saidenberg—in Purcell and Boyce only; Gotham Baroque Ensemble. Mono AS-1003; Stereo SAS-1003.

BEETHOVEN: *Quintet in E Flat for Piano and Winds, Op. 16*; Theodore Saidenberg (piano); Joseph Singer (horn); Arthur Weisberg (bassoon); Charles Russo (clarinet); Harry Shulman (oboe); **J. S. BACH:** *Trio Sonata No. 1 in C*; **HANDEL:** *Concerto a 4 in D minor*; Claude Monteux (flute); Harry Shulman (oboe); George Ricci (cello); Robert Conant (harpsichord). Mono AS-1004; Stereo SAS-1004.

HAYDN: *String Quartet in D, Op. 76, No. 5*; **MOZART:** *String Quartet in B Flat, K. 458 ("The Hunt")*; Claremont String Quartet. Mono AS-1005; Stereo SAS-1005.

which seems to be the aim of most recording companies and/or artists.

The Handel Concerto is lightweight—strictly entertainment; and Saidenberg manages to project it with great charm, not attempting to explore non-existent depths. There is some trouble, as expected, from the horns, but not enough to be harmful to the whole. The sound of the orchestra, horns outstanding, is too close upon us in both mono and stereo. The harpichord is beautifully reproduced. The Geminiani which concludes this first “concert” is well played, but arouses little feeling in me beyond the negligible sensation of not being bored. The Vivaldi alone justifies the price of this disc, and the Handel is a handsome bonus.

1002: In all, this is probably the most distinguished record in a very fine series. Past recordings and a few live performances of the *Don Quixote* have shown it to be a masterpiece of the most unusual nature in baroque music. With its program (supplied by the titles of the individual sections) or without, its humor and grace make it irresistible. The only other recording within near memory, by Newell Jenkins and the Milan Chamber Orchestra (Washington 403), is quite lively but too ragged for comfort and actually not varied enough in mood. Saidenberg provides more than efficiency. Hear, just as a single example, the furious pace set by the conductor in the *Attack on the Windmills*. I am sure that it is delightful without knowing Telemann's programmatic intentions; having them increases the pleasure.

Daniel Saidenberg (Photo by G. Maillard Kessler)



sure of this section as it offers some idea of the conductor's attitudes to the Quixote story. Saidenberg also uses an edition that differs sharply from Jenkins'. The latter employs only strings and continuo, without solos. Saidenberg has the magnificent Harry Shulman as oboe soloist in the *Awakening of Don Quixote* (a lullaby, by the way) and Baron as flutist in *Rosinante Galloping*. The added fluency in these solos makes for a far more meaningful contrast between the sections than we have on Jenkins'. I single out these differences as a few among many. The older version is actually non-competitive. The sound is very heavy in the bass.

The Handel works on the opposite side constitute a brilliant, varied recital in themselves. The oboe concerto is an intense work of great beauty, superbly performed by Shulman. Every phrase is molded to perfection, with not the slightest strain evident, and a ravishing full tone. The orchestral support is fine. The shorter works are charming, particularly the tiny Arias for two oboes, two horns, and bassoon. These miniatures which, according to the liner notes, "may have been used for the changing of the guard at St. James Palace", require the utmost in virtuosity and brio from all involved. The five players certainly supply these qualities in abundance. By all means, get this record.

1003: I dimly remember some or all of this Purcell on an old set of Concert Hall 78s conducted by Saidenberg. It is surprising that no recording has appeared since then (with the exception of a possible transfer of this set to LP), since it displays the composer at the peak of his creative power. The conductor obviously has great affection for these suites as is shown by his allegiance to music no one else seems to find worth-while; however, his beat is a little stiff and I found the presentation somewhat monotonous. Still, it is welcome and the performance is always convincingly professional.

The Pergolesi Trio Sonata (of *Pulcinella* fame) is charmingly played. It is a pleasure to hear the original for a change. I had been so used to the first section in Stravinsky's "re-creation" that I had come to think of it as his own. The remainder

of the work, moreover, is just as worthy.

The Boyce symphony is also a happy choice. It comes as a relief to be able to hear a work of Boyce's *among* other music for a change. The only other recordings of this work (Westminster and Decca) come as part of the complete (eight) Boyce Symphonies. I have never been overjoyed at the prospect of listening to four of these symphonies in succession, delightful as they may be. Here we have one of the best in a concert of great distinction and varied styles. The performance is very good.

The Telemann is another charming, lightweight work, perhaps not of the highest inspiration, but definitely good listening as part of a "concert".

1004: The Beethoven Quintet is one of the lesser accomplishments of the set. The performance is a good one, but in light of the competition from Glazer-N. Y. Winds (Concert Disc 213), Serkin-Philadelphia Winds (Columbia ML-4834), and Gieseking-Philharmonia Winds (Angel 35303), it is outclassed, although it is nice to have it coupled with something other than the Mozart Quintet, K. 452. The version I am most partial to is the Concert Disc, with its smooth ensemble, lightness, and superior sound. The new performance does not display quite this easy flow or perfectly jelled ensemble. In addition, the surface is rather noisy. The individual players, however, are fine.

The Bach and Handel on the reverse side are, again, splendidly played. But why the distant sound on these? It is odd that some of the larger concerted works should be so close-miked while the ones which should be intimate are heard from afar.

1005: There is always room for the kind of playing offered by the Claremont Quartet, a terrific ensemble which I had never heard prior to this release. Their tone is balanced, their interpretations completely satisfying. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the "advanced listener" for whom this set is intended will probably have long ago purchased other recordings of these familiar quartets. With the services of this superior ensemble available, it would have afforded the opportunity to record some works missing from the cata-

log, e.g. Haydn's Op. 20, No. 5 or Op. 33, No. 3.

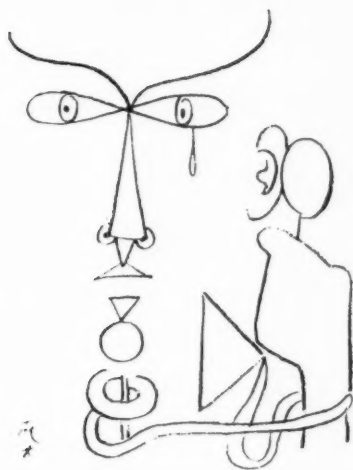
This venture is a distinct success. There is no attempt to present anyone's complete works or even a sizable portion thereof; variety within a somewhat consistent framework is the aim and it is accomplished with much more than proficiency. Fortunately we have a single musical director, Mr. Saidenberg, who evidently plans the repertory, and assorted groups to present it. But a few problems, in addition to the ones posed in the foregoing critique of the records, do exist:

1. Accompanying literature (with the review copies) tells us that the covers are suitable for framing. These covers present previously unpublished Picasso drawings; every one of them is a beauty. Looking at these records is as pleasant an experience as listening to them. However, what happens to the record once the jacket has been framed?

2. "The American Society Concerts-in-the-Home" is not only an unwieldy appellation, but one which can be extremely misleading; this name closely resembles those of the myriad organizations which once sold records through the mail at bargain prices. Such companies specialized in *Scheherazade*, the Beethoven Fifth, the "Unfinished", and others of the great standard classics. There isn't a popular favorite in this bunch; there is no desire to present one. The effect of the title could therefore be to give the impression that this is a beginners' music-appreciation course. Nothing could be further from the truth.

3. The liner notes, like the company's name, seem to aim rather "low". Telemann, trio sonatas, etc. and Picasso covers form a distinctly highbrow totality; yet the notes are pretty much on the music-appreciation order.

If I thought a while longer, I could undoubtedly find more complaints. Let me rather conclude by saying that it will probably be a long time before I have another opportunity to enjoy this much music so thoroughly, unless "The American Society Concerts-in-the-Home" should hurry up with its next release of popular favorites by Quantz, Loeillet, Stamitz, C. P. E. Bach, *et al.*



La Voix humaine

de
Francis Poulenc
et
Jean Cocteau
✱

(Reviewed on next page)

*Now that
this definitive
recording
has been
made, who
can hope to
rival it?*

By PHILIP L. MILLER

POULENC: "*La Voix humaine*"; Denise Duval (soprano); Orchestra of Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique conducted by Georges Prêtre. RCA Victor Soria Series LS-2385, \$6.98, or Stereo LSS-2385, \$7.98.

THIS UNIQUE monodrama was first conceived by Jean Cocteau for the speaking stage; it was created at the Comédie-Française by Berthe Bovy in 1932. Subsequently it was translated into an Italian film starring Anna Magnani under the direction of Roberto Rossellini. Poulenc's operatic version had its première at the Opéra-Comique on February 6th, 1959, with Denise Duval and Georges Prêtre as star and conductor. The sets and the staging were by Cocteau himself. With the beautifully illustrated accompanying booklet (containing the complete libretto), this recording documents that occasion.

The protagonist and the conductor came to New York for a production in the Carnegie Hall subscription series of the American Opera Company, on February 23rd of this year. Those who were present at that performance are certain to be keenly interested in the recording. As one whose seat was in the higher regions of the house I myself missed a good deal of the subtle detail in the score. Aside from the visual aspect of Miss Duval's characterization (which indeed is no small matter) this is a work better suited to one's own living room than to an auditorium.

The Sunday before the Carnegie Hall performance, The New York *Herald Tribune* published an interview with the star by Jay Harrison in which certain lights were thrown on Poulenc's "lyric tragedy": "The publishing house of Ricordi", she said, "was looking for a libretto for Poulenc after the success of his '*Dialogues des Carmélites*'. Hervé Dugardin, director of the Paris branch of Ricordi, came to Poulenc with the Cocteau play and reminded him that recently, in Italy, Maria Callas had pushed Mario Del Monaco on stage because she felt he was hogging the applause. He believed '*La Voix humaine*, would be perfect for Callas because, as he remarked, 'she'd be alone and there would be no one for her to push; she'd have the applause all to herself.'"

Poulenc, according to Miss Duval, liked the idea but preferred a different prima donna. Duval had starred in his "*Les Mamelles de Tirésias*" (her delightful and zany performance in this earlier work shared the evening with "*La Voix humaine*"

in Carnegie Hall) and in the "*Carmélites*". Her special talents had not been too well served by the general run of repertory operas, and Poulenc was eager to provide her with a suitable vehicle. "When it was completed," Miss Duval continued, "Poulenc gave a reception and sang the whole thing through—very badly. Still, people were moved. They always are. It is my experience wherever I have sung it all over Europe—that the first few minutes people don't know what to make of it: then, suddenly, they become involved, engrossed, until they are scarcely breathing. They get personally drawn into the situation; it's remarkable."

It is a little corny at this point to refer to Duval's performance as a *tour de force*. With a stage representing simply a room with a large luxuriant bed, an armchair, a table, and a telephone, she holds the stage for three quarters of an hour, talking into the telephone. She is taking a painful leave of her lover who is to be married the following day. She is determined to be brave, so she tells him, but her calm moments alternate with passionate outbursts as her story unfolds. The achievement of the composer in his setting of Cocteau's poignant text is an endlessly subtle thing. The vocal line, as it rises and falls, serves to heighten the inflection of the words. Poulenc has avoided most of the usual devices for achieving musical continuity; to follow the text faithfully this music must be episodic. It is true that he uses descriptive themes and brings

them back as occasion arises, but we are warned against looking for Wagnerian *leitmotive*, and there is no symphonic development.

In a way the triumph of all concerned—dramatist, composer, singer and conductor—may prove the downfall of their joint masterpiece. For now that this definitive recording has been made, who can hope to rival it? Duval's voice, of course, is very much the typical French soprano, at its best bright and shimmering in tone, but not free of edginess and shrillness. Poulenc's music is designed to bring out all that is best in this voice, and it fits her perfectly. But tone matters here only in its appropriateness; it exists only for what it expresses. Every word must have its full dramatic and emotional value, every syllable must be placed for proper declamation. Thus we live with this woman through her emotional crises. Indeed, what sets this opera apart from most of its contemporaries is that the listener does become involved.

The recording is well achieved, with perhaps a bit more spotlight on the voice than would be possible without the use of the microphone. The words come through to us in this way as they never could in any hall, and those who want help are provided with the libretto in French and English. And I might add that if visual appearance is a vital selling aid this handsome package should enjoy a huge success. Only one small mechanical blemish—an echo—occasionally mars the reproduction.

Denise Duval in the Paris production of "*La Voix humaine*" (Photo by Lipnitzki)



Introducing a new column . . .



WORDS ONLY

By PAUL KRESH

EVER SINCE father drove mother out of what they called the parlor with his 95th playing of Taylor Holmes reciting "Boots" on the old Victor blue label over the wind-up talking machine, a slow but steady effort has been under way to capture the sound of speech on discs for home consumption, schools and libraries. Records have been issued reproducing the rhythms and intonations of verse, the magic of theatrical performance, the wisdom of elder statesmen, the patter of comedians, the living record of history and, quite recently, even the story of modern science.

Music took over the world of the phonograph so early that to hear recorded human speech without it became something of a novelty. The era of radio took the edge off this somewhat. In recent years, especially since the advent of the long-playing record, the spoken word has been committed to discs with varying degrees of success. Although no such experimental daring has characterized the ventures of recording companies as marked, for example, the old Columbia Workshop on the

air (though a few of these programs were turned into albums), some noble efforts have been made. Some of these tries are downright plodding; others are marred by the limitations, especially in recorded anthologies of verse, of the poet's own voice—not always the most mellifluous of instruments. Some lack the necessary crispness, others sufficient intimacy—although the fashion nowadays is to direct recorded readings for an intimate man-to-man quality that is well-advised for playback in the home study—a far cry from the raving of "Boots"! Weaned as we are, too, away from the aural world of radio to the more attention-holding TV screen, our ears have grown a bit reluctant to yield sufficient concentration to the voice alone for half an hour or more. A long-playing record, without the relief of musical instruments, can at times seem long-playing indeed. It can take both imagination and tenacity to follow a full-length play by ear only.

To overcome our resistance, and raise the general standard in this field, a number of record companies—Caedmon and Spoken Arts in particular—in recent years have assembled some of the brightest voices of our times before their microphones. The current Schwann Catalog lists about six pages of the closest type under "Spoken and Miscellaneous"—not all strictly devoted to the human voice, to be sure. There are sounds of birds and the stridulations of insects, even dance instruction courses. Leaving aside lectures

A poet, librettist, and novelist as well as critic, Paul Kresh has also written numerous TV and radio scripts, including the award-winning Adventures In Music series, and has scripted and directed many documentary films. He is currently Public Relations Director of a national religious organization and editor of the magazine American Judaism.

on the Kinsey Report (oh yes, there is one such), language records, a record of sounds apparently audible only to dogs, another on auto races, and so forth, the number of recorded dramas alone runs to more than 100 currently, and over 500 are devoted to poetry, prose, and speech with mainly literary emphasis.

The coming of stereo further enhances the illusion of reality for the stage play just as it does for opera, providing effects of actors speaking from distant parts of the stage and in motion, and overcoming some of the monotony of the monophonic studio recording. Not too many private buyers, though, have thus far proved willing to invest in a multi-record album of a play which might not ever tempt them to a second or third whirl—let alone in collecting medleys by African insects or locomotives. In our survey of English-speaking discs we have decided first of all to concentrate on readings, therefore, with the hope of getting around later to plays, science, documentaries and the like. The science recordings and novelties would seem for the most part to be happiest in the catalogues of libraries, schools, or radio stations—although some startling figures on sales of recent science records to

private purchasers have been reported by the companies.

Exceptions aside, it would seem to be poetry that offers the greatest lure for repeated playings, what with its musical elements and its characteristic of yielding more to the attentive listener on successive hearings. Readings of literary prose, though often less satisfactory, can be wonderfully illuminating to the right texts when done well, or better than well, and we will cover some of these. No stereos in the readings category have come our way so far.

Since no regular column on this subject has appeared in these pages for a while (though there have been many isolated reviews on spoken word recordings) we have taken the liberty of going back a bit and dusting off some not quite new releases, especially those deserving more than casual consideration by anyone planning to build a spoken word library.

For other languages, we've called in appropriate experts: this month there'll be some reviews of recorded French plays by Stephen Potter. In English, though, we'll consider reading only this time. Here are our reports on a sampling of readings out of England, Ireland and home soil. . .

Hal Holbrook in Mark Twain Tonight!

Columbia OL-5440, \$4.98.

▲RECORDED live during a New York performance (Mr. Holbrook's engagement was produced by John Lotus and Bunker Jenkins), this really constitutes something more than a reading, since the audience is there to collaborate. The 34-year old Hal Holbrook succeeds uncannily in bringing the presence of 70-year old Samuel Clemens into your living room, even without the aid of visual mannerisms and make-up that were important to the live show.

"I was born modest," says the voice that you quickly come to accept as Twain's own, "but it wore off." The voice then goes on, with perfect timing—Mr. Holbrook, we're told, studies ancient recordings and old Edison films by Twain to get it all exact—to discourse on such subjects as smoking, journalism, and a hilarious

encounter with an interviewer whom the interviewee has chosen to confound. Superb bits of business, like the discreet sound of a match being struck as the lecturer lights up during a sermon on smoking, add dimension to a performance that at no time has any of the earmarks of a prose reading, so skillfully has the material been edited and brought to life.

On Side Two we meet a different Mark Twain—the crusader of "Huck Finn", battling prejudice with devices of the subtlest irony. When he wants to make a point against scorn of the Negro, he lets a segregationist tell the tale himself in such a manner as to have his own cussedness give him away. And so the actor brings this Twain, too, to life, lashing out, in seemingly ingenuous tones, against all the hypocrisy, stupidity, and narrowness the author so much despised. Mr. Hol-

brook has accomplished some kind of triumph on this side, in pitching his voice so that what we hear is a very old man imitating a young one. The sound, on mono, is excellent. Stereo might have made Mr. Holbrook almost *too* persuasive. It's uncanny enough, this witty ghost in your living room.

•
D. H. Lawrence's "Lady Chatterley's Lover" Read by Pamela Brown.

Directed by Howard Sackler. Caedmon TC-116, \$5.95.

▲UNLIKE Mr. Holbrook, Miss Brown, we fear, is obviously reading. Her performance of excerpts from the recently resurrected Lawrence masterpiece is slow on two counts: that the sturdy, homely prose in which Lawrence fashioned this work is too grey to long beguile the ear, and that Miss Brown's reading, while admirably lucid, is ladylike at times to the point of being ridiculous. The passages have been skillfully selected with more than a thought to the sensational, but this generally exceptional actress fails until the very end to instill into them the fleshly warmth that their frankness would seem to this listener to demand.

The gamekeeper comes through in a cleverly wrought Yorkshire accent which Miss Brown furnishes, but Lady Chatterley herself, "old at 27" as she seeks her way back to life through the ways of nature, begins to sound like a garrulous old bore before the record reaches the rather thrilling ending she supplies, when the printed page finally melts away toward the end of side two and she succeeds in some measure in recreating the woman for us. Strictly for Lawrence addicts who would rather listen than read, if there are any such. The sound is clear and fashionably subdued.

•
T. S. Eliot Reading Poems and Choruses (*Ash Wednesday, The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, and others*). Caedmon TC-1045. \$5.95.

T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land and Other Poems. Read by Robert Speaight. Spoken Arts 734. \$5.95.

▲FOR those to whom Eliot's voice is a marvelous musical instrument (and this

listener admittedly is one of them), his own readings of these major works would seem unsurpassable, though the poet himself is far from dogmatic in his opinions as to how his poetry should be recited. Eliot can create nostalgia with the lilt of a syllable, accumulate formidable power by a droning beat, and invest the most complex images and concepts with a clarity no amount of scholarship or analytical footnoting has surpassed. His voice fashions character, conjures mood, evokes melody. The choruses from *The Rock, Murder In The Cathedral, and Family Reunion* as he reads them on the Caedmon disc are a revelation in that he has stepped out of the dry, laconic sound-mask that generally characterizes his reading into a treatment much more subjective, direct, and powerful. But, to some, his voice will still sound dry and reptilian. The selections of this disc were chosen by Eliot himself and recorded in London in 1955. They add up to a recorded treasure for his admirers.

For those who find the Eliot voice an irritant, there is Robert Speaight, reading some of the same selections and a few different ones as well, on the Spoken Arts label. In choosing *The Waste Land*, Mr. Speaight brings formidable equipment—years of experience as an author, actor, lecturer, and Eliot's own choice for the role of Thomas à Becket in *Murder In The Cathedral*—to a formidable task. His well-sustained reading of this major work of the twentieth century obviously was prepared with great thought and yields some passionate as well as diverting moments. Yet for those who have heard the wit in Eliot's own voice as he re-creates the *Game of Chess* or the remote evocation of doom in his majestically stressed syl-

Eliot, great pauses and melodious incantation



The American Record Guide

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lables in the passage "If there were water but no rock", the Speaight treatment is likely to be a disappointment. (Unhappily I am unable to locate Eliot's own remarkable recording of the complete *Waste Land* in the current catalogue.) All does not move with the cinematic, soundtrack tension of the poet's own interpretation as he speaks across the hills of time to his literary cronies in Greece, Italy, and Hell by means of cunning paraphrases and many-faceted allusions. As for the rest of the selections, Speaight's reading of *Prufrock* is cursory while Eliot's, with its great pauses and melodious incantation, is much more meaningful and haunting. In *The Hollow Men* we were disappointed once more as this time Speaight chose merely to declaim. And the whisper at the end is neither so elegant nor so spine-chilling as Eliot's own (again, remembered but not listed currently by Mr. Schwann.) The Speaight record is worth owning if only for good insights into the *Waste Land*, though read with authority and drama and, as we said, for some in a more acceptable and pleasantly-timbred voice than the poet's.

•
T. S. Eliot Reads His Four Quartets.

Library Series, Angel 45012. \$5.95.

▲ALONG with *Murder in the Cathedral* (Angel 3505B), which properly comes under the heading of recorded drama, this disc has been out for some time but still should be called to the attention of anyone contemplating a recorded Eliot collection. Once again, the master makes all seem simple as he unhurriedly but with a subtle music delivers the total text of what may well survive as his profoundest effort. Eliot himself, in the program notes of the *Four Quartets*, points out as usual that he does not consider his interpretation "definitive" since the poem, "if it is of any depth and complexity, will have meanings in it concealed from the author; and should be capable of being read in many ways, and with a variety of emotional emphases." Whether or not the listener feels he can trace the forms of real music in the movements of this exalted sermon-essay, with its startling variety of rhythms, images and religious, philosophical and literary references, he is sure to be aided appreciably

in approaching the poet's intention by a masterly performance, well-recorded.

•
T. S. Eliot: Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats. Spoken Arts 758. \$5.95.

▲ANOTHER treat for Eliot-lovers, who probably have been out anyway buying up all available copies. The excerpts performed on Angel by Robert Donat a few years ago with a rather charming musical background are simply not in the running, for all the production values they offer, once Mr. Eliot warms up to such read-aloudable delights as *Gus: The Theatre Cat* and *Macavity*, the mystery cat who has broken every human law and even the law of gravity. The record is supplied with Macavity's pawprints instead of program notes—just one more item in its favor. Recorded with exceptional fidelity and care.

•
JOYCE: "Ulysses"—Soliloquies of Molly and Leopold Bloom Read by E. G. Marshall and Siobhan McKenna. Directed by Howard Sackler. Caedmon TC-1063. \$5.95.

▲THE reading by Miss McKenna is justly celebrated. She brings to life, before our very ears, in accents and tones of the greatest variety progressing with superb skill to an unforgettable end, the unpunctuated night-thoughts of Molly from the pages of the Joyce masterpiece. This time we transcend the merely intimate "reading" to arrive inside the very mind and soul of Molly herself, as the embodiment of all womankind. This is a *tour de force* that makes one completely forget time, machinery, the length of the record, even the presence of the actress as attention is caught up in the apotheosis of the "stream-of-consciousness" method as Joyce used it in the most amazing, if not the longest, sentence in the English language—a challenge Miss McKenna meets and subdues with great artistry. But it should be emphasized that there is no let-down on the other side, either, as E. G. Marshall materializes with more breath-taking art as Leopold Bloom himself in the passage where Mr. Bloom is

(Continued on page 755)

Other Reviews

(including stereo®)

THERE IS IN SOULS *a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.*

—William Cowper

J. S. BACH: *Cantata No. 140—Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme; Cantata No. 4—Christ lag in Todesbanden*; Laurence Dutoit (soprano) and Kurt Equiluz (tenor) in No. 140 only; Hans Braun (bass) in both; Vienna Chamber Choir and Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Felix Prohaska. Vanguard/Bach Guild BG-598, \$4.98, or Stereo BGS-5026, \$5.95.

(4 & 140)
Prohaska.....Bach Guild BG-511
(140)
Scherchen.....Westminster XWN-18394
(4)
Lehmann.....Archive ARC-3063

©SINCE the advent of stereo, I had been hoping that Prohaska would have another go at these works with the benefit of more rehearsal time for his orchestra, and modern technical resources. Well, it's happened. The orchestral slips have all been corrected; the sound is a model of clarity; but the readings are perhaps the least satisfying I have ever heard of either of these masterpieces. On the old BG-511, Prohaska led with deep feeling, complete communication with the minds, if not the bowing arms, of his orchestra, very good soloists, and a heavenly chorus. The sound was not particularly good, even for its day (1951 or thereabouts). The soloists in the old No. 140 were Felbermayer, the same (at least in name), Braun, and a tenor named Alfred Uhl who, as far as I know, has been absent from records ever since. The loss of the last-named is keenly

felt while listening to the painfully strained, punchy singing of Equiluz. Soprano and bass on the old were completely satisfactory, being somewhat overshadowed by the movingly projected duets of Laszlo and Poell on the fine Scherchen. In this new release, Dutoit sings with bland efficiency while Braun sounds rather thin. The duets are here sung from opposite ends of the room—a considerable hindrance to understanding the sensual piety of the text. The chorus sings well enough, which isn't nearly good enough after the standard set by Prohaska's former forces, the so-called "Bach Guild Choir". Prohaska pulls no surprises; he also seems disinterested. Comparing the two performances displays the great difference between working for a buck (or a Schilling) and genuine inspiration.

No. 4 is an altogether different matter. Same minor complaints against BG-511, same great satisfaction. On the old, Prohaska utilized chorus throughout. With such excellent singing, the solos were not missed at all. This new version has little of its reverse side's dry efficiency; it is full of "ideas". Only one soloist is used, the bass for Verse 5—*Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm*. A strange procedure which might have been successful with good singing. Unfortunately, it is quite terrible. Braun showed himself to be an intelligent artist and a genuine Bachian on earlier records. Here he just manages

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Although Ravel and Debussy are so often mentioned in the same breath, these two quartets are separated by far more than the thickness of a record. Ravel fashions his music here with restraint, delicacy and understatement — whereas Debussy pushes hard at the walls of traditional quartet structure to achieve a more wide-open self expression. But both quartets are marvelous exploitations of the per-

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Connoisseurs invariably refer to the consummate tonal excellence of the Paganini quartet. In the main, of course, this is due to the exceptional musicianship of the performers: Henri Temianka and Charles Li-bove, violins; David Schwartz, viola; Lucien Laporte, cello. "One gets the impression they could do magnificently with pawnshop fiddles," writes Jack Guinn in the Sunday Denver Post.

But no pawnshop fiddles, these! Unique and wonderful — the four instruments played by the Paganini are a matched set, made by Stradivarius himself. Once owned by Paganini, these instruments pour forth a flood of golden tones which are superbly matched — and matchless!

to get through without choking. The strain placed on the voice, throughout its range but most markedly at the top, precludes any resemblance of effective phrasing, while the pitch is seldom clearly identifiable. This should never have been released as is. Another point: the tenor chorale, *Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn*, is taken at such a frantic pace that the chorus cannot keep up. Lehmann's No. 4 is a rather dreary, overly-cautious affair for five of its seven sections. Verses 3 and 5, however, are assigned to tenor Krebs and baritone Fischer-Dieskau, re-

spectively, with both giving examples of Bach singing at its best—although F.-D. is forced to do a little transposing. This interpretation is not nearly so successful as the old Prohaska; but the sections mentioned and the overside Cantata No. 1 (*Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*) merit its place in any Bach collection. So if you are after 140 and 4 coupled, BG-511 remains my choice. Scherchen's 140 is paired with a beautiful *Actus Tragicus* (no. 106), making that another highly desirable record. These fancy new versions are not in the same class. —H.G.

Walcha on the harpsichord

THIS is the first of two records devoted to the complete six clavier Partitas by Bach as performed on the harpsichord by the blind German organist, Helmut Walcha. As he has done with the Bach organ works on Deutsche Grammophon, Walcha is presently engaged in recording the complete harpsichord works for Electrola, certainly an incredible achievement for a person with his affliction. Those who know the organ records will not be surprised by the fact that Walcha also plays the harpsichord, for in the third part of his *Clavierübung* the four Duettos were performed on that instrument. Those who are familiar with Walcha's organ style and particular approach in the interpretation of Bach's works also will have some idea of how he plays the harpsichord pieces, for basically the style is the same. There is marvelous rhythmic thrust—everything always is moving ahead—and the music is tremendously dynamic. Tempi, in contrast to many he elected for the organ, are sometimes quite fast, but the beat is always rock-steady; there is far less un-

evenness in Walcha's harpsichord technique than in that of almost any other performer on that exposed instrument. As far as clarity of contrapuntal passages is concerned, I don't think any performer today can match Walcha, and for this reason the present record is particularly valuable since the harpsichord is much more nearly ideal for hearing in detail the particular style of phrasing that he utilizes. This style is essentially the same method that Schweitzer outlined many years ago, but in Walcha's playing it is brought to an intensely refined state; it is the primary reason for the wonderful clarity and expression in his organ and harpsichord performances.

Not all repeats are observed, due to the space limitations in having all three Partitas on one record, and Walcha strangely does not vary his registration when repeats are taken except for the final movements where he adds a sixteen-foot stop. In general, however, his choice of registration is excellent, and he makes the most of the coloristic possibilities of his beautifully recorded Ammer instrument. The sarabandes may for some tastes, including mine, be too straightforward, and those who prefer a more romantic treatment possibly will think Walcha pedestrian in these movements. It is, to be sure, a different interpretation, but one no less valid, and the performer's occasionally austere

J. S. BACH: *Partitas Nos. 1 in B flat, 2 in C minor, and 3 in E minor*; Helmut Walcha (harpsichord). Electrola E-80-445, \$5.98.

Kirkpatrick.....D.G.G. Archive ARC-3129/31 (No. 2)
Londowska.....RCA Victor LM-2194



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"I'll See You Again"... "Zigeuner"... "Tokay"... hardly a melody in this musical that hasn't become a standard! Noel Coward called *Bitter Sweet* his personal favorite among all his shows. In this first extended recording, British musical comedy stars Vanessa Lee, Roberto Cardinali, Julie Dawn are featured. Angel (S) 35814



A lively antidote for winter waspishness, this Tyrolean musical ran for 223 Broadway performances in 1936, with captivating Kitty Carlisle as the Inn proprietress. Since then it's waltzed its way from Berlin to the Belgian Congo—and now, Angel waltzes it right into the catalog, for the first time.
Angel (S) 35815

Prefix (S) indicates stereo version available.



conceptions are more than made up for by the rhythmic drive of his faster dance pieces, such as, for example, the gigue in the first Partita. I miss the double-dotting in the French-style opening to the second Partita, but again the remaining sections feature a wonderful sense of movement and flow. The first part of the sixth Partita is a marvelous example of Walcha's amazingly clean passage work, and other isolated parts, such as the Air, with its ideal choice of tempo, or the Sarabande, played very straight but with enormous power, are beautifully executed.

In sum, other performances may be more to the liking of some collectors, but few recordings have so much value in terms of a particular style of Bach interpretation and its very impressive execution. —I.K.

•
J. S. BACH: *Mass in B minor*; Vienna State Opera Orchestra and Vienna Academy Chorus conducted by Hermann Scherchen; with Pierrette Alarie, Leopold Simoneau, Nan Merriman, and Gustav Neidlinger. Westminster Stereo set WST-304, six sides, \$17.98.

⑧SINCE the introduction of the LP, the two outstanding recorded performances of the *B minor Mass* have been Karajan's (Angel), which was distinguished by the contributions of his soloists, and Scherchen's (Westminster), which was powerful and in total effect the stronger of the two. Now we have another effort by Scherchen—with a new and better quartet of vocalists, except for Neidlinger (Merriman is particularly fine)—which again reveals his strong conception of the music in a recommendable performance that Westminster has recorded with most unusual clarity in stereo.

With this issue Westminster has taken a giant step forward in the art of faithful recording. Unlike many of its earlier stereo releases, this one has sound that is natural and pleasing. The stereo effects are palpable without drawing attention to themselves. Surfaces are quiet and the level of the recording is quite acceptable.

I suspect it may be quite a while before the combination of Scherchen's reading of and Westminster recording of the *B minor Mass* is surpassed. —C.J.L.

Four works for wind instruments

BARBER: *Summer Music*, Op. 31;

NIELSEN: *Quintet for Winds*, Op. 43.

The Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet. Columbia ML-5441, \$4.98.

▲MAGNIFICENT playing, impressive tonal control, and beautiful imagery mark the most recent recorded performances by this superb group. Woodwind ensembles are larger in number than ever before, but the Philadelphians are certainly one of the wealthiest, artistically. The splendor of their sound and its application in varied manner to the musical purpose is a compelling feature of their playing, now as before—a point worth making because the fivesome now includes a different flutist, Robert Cole having replaced the magical virtuoso, William Kincaid. Nothing has been lost, for all of Kincaid's wizardry.

It is good to have an up-to-date version of the Nielsen. This Dane is a southern cousin to Sibelius. His music is less

melancholy, though it has certain austere outlines. Nielsen's Quintet has a personality habit of starting one specific idea and then passing on to another. Despite this the music is not disconnected, since thematic threads stitch the sections together. It is also a test of performance to integrate the music—the Philadelphia gentlemen cover this problem with ease.

And now the Barber: In the fall of 1956 I reviewed the *Summer Music* after a Tanglewood performance. I prophesied success. Good guess: many performances have materialized and two recordings to boot. Why this optimistic supposition? Barber's work is music of craftsmanship, but it is less than acutely creative. The substratum of composers, good ones at that, is the coterie of the eclectic. Barber illustrates the codification in this opus. Diplomatically composed music is a desirable commodity. Here it is. I damn

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myself, willingly, by asserting that the symphonies of Joachim Raff also obtained (once upon a time) wide hearing. "Better to be played now than never" is an argument I cannot discount, however. Nor can I argue the brilliant rendition heard on this recording. Columbia's engineers have produced a superb example of spectacular, beautiful woodwind sound. —A.C.

●
BARBER: *Summer Music*; **DAHL:** *Allegro and Arioso for Five Wind Instruments*; **ETLER:** *Quintet for Winds*. The New York Woodwind Quintet. Concert-Disc Stereo CS-216, \$5.98.

⑧THE tyranny of the box office has no effect on woodwind music. But if it did this entry would bring fairly good returns. It contains a mixture of "new" and old music. The former was once a term considered a call for the critic's cannon and musketry. No longer is this true. Much new music is dated at birth; little of it is dateless. And a large part of the new compositions are bent *toward* acceptance, rather than acceptance *from* the music itself.

Barber's quasi-impressionistic, single-movement quintet was written in 1956. It would be philanthropic to consider his work other than a professional piece. This composer retains his leading role as one of the elect eclectics. Let him be; he does not harm one's taste, but he certainly does not improve it. Nearby I have reviewed another recording of this work. The New Yorkers play the *Summer Music* beautifully; the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet perform with greater tonal intensity.

This recording has another new item (Etlér's, composed in 1955) which is more comprehensive, more new, more novel, more musical, and an experience to be appreciated. Etlér knows his winding way with the woodwinds—he is himself a versatile performer on the oboe. Most of his earlier music had cheerful temper; this work is much more seriously propounded. It has intense colorations; glistening liquidity; its sonorities are a constant joy of fresh discovery. Above all, it eliminates the generally predictable chit-chat that marks so much music for winds.

Old models serve Ingolf Dahl, and he

serves the listener best. His opus (composed eighteen years ago) is an interplay of brilliance and lyricism, further contrasted by differing formal patterns. The oldest piece on the record is, I think, the strongest, and is therefore the "newest" of all.

The performances are first-rate; the sound full, resonant, and with excellent depth. Beware of the labeling of this record. On my copy both sides were identified as the Etlér. —A.C.

●
BARTÓK: *Concerto No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra* (1931); *Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra* (1945); György Sándor (piano); Pro Musica Orchestra of Vienna conducted by Michael Gielen. Stereo Vox ST-PL-D 511490, \$5.98.

⑧AT present these are the only stereo versions of Bartók's marvelous second and third piano concerti, and it is particularly felicitous that they should be performed by György Sándor, one of the outstanding interpreters of that composer's music. His steel-fingered attack as well as his insights into Bartók's style make his playing authoritative, although one certainly could have wished for slightly less erratic recorded sound. Balances between piano and orchestra and indeed within the orchestra itself tend to be less than ideal, and the tone of the solo instrument is distant and shallow. Stereo effects are somewhat exaggerated with much separation, and I had the impression that the piano wandered in its location during the performances. Orchestral support is disappointing not only with regard to internal details but also in matters of ensemble precision. Yet these are indeed very exciting readings, and the interested collector would be well advised to judge for himself whether Sándor's impressive playing successfully offsets the less satisfactory orchestral participation and the defects in the recording itself. I think it does. —I.K.

●
BARTÓK: *Deux Images, Op. 10*; **BRAHMS:** *Hungarian Dances Nos 1-3, 5-7, and 10*; Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tibor Paul. Epic LC-3635, \$4.98.

▲THE composition of the two *Images* closely followed a period in which Bartók

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and his compatriot, Kodály, had exhaustively collected and annotated the folk music of Hungary and its neighboring countries. In the polka-like second episode entitled "Village Dance" the influence of this expedition is already obvious, although Bartók was to use his ethnic material with greater imagination and effect in later works. The first *Image*, an intense and introspective adagio with the cryptic subtitle of *In Full Flower*, clearly points the way to such masterpieces of extended orchestral writing as the *Music for Strings, Celeste and Percussion* and the *Concerto for Orchestra*. Tibor Paul, a new name to this reviewer, leads both the Bartók and the Brahms (which were results of his ethnic delving) with understanding and affection. The reproduction is a mite foggy. —A.K.

•
BARTÓK: *Suite, Op. 14; 15 Hungarian Peasant Songs; Microcosmos, Book VI*; Irén Marik (piano). Draco 1331, \$4.98. (Available only by mail, at \$4.98 postpaid, from Draco Records, Inc., P. O. Box 214, Amherst, Virginia.)

▲**DISTRESSED** by the acceptance of shallow gypsy band music as the folk music of Hungary, Bartók set out in 1905 to find an authentic tradition through the study of genuine peasant music. Each of the works chosen for this recording shows the influence of his subsequent contact with the folk song. Miss Marik is a superb Bartók interpreter. Her playing is appropriately powerful, sensitive, and free. Also, she is herself a Hungarian, and studied there for a time with Bartók, which undoubtedly accounts for her highly sympathetic and authoritative approach. The *Suite, Op. 14*, is a particularly beautiful and significant piece. It was written in 1916 when Bartók was forced to confine his folk song studies to Hungary because of World War I. His consistent use of fourths in short melodic lines may well have been inspired by Hungarian folk music, in which the descending melodic fourth is an important cadential interval. In this work he began to use the "common chord", a simultaneous sounding of a major and a minor chord built on the same root, which turned up more and more in his later compositions. The work is brilliantly and

vigorously performed, with ample tone and rhythmic intensity. The *15 Hungarian Peasant Songs*, which Bartók later orchestrated, are exquisite contemporary settings of the ancient melodies. Miss Marik's choice of color and mood here, too, is impeccable. Though there is a broad rhythmic freedom, an elemental pulsation is clearly at the heart of each separate section. *Microcosmos*, Book VI, was written in the late 1930s and contains many neo-classic elements that do not appear in the earlier scores. It also makes advanced use of the aforementioned "common chord". Despite the pedagogical purpose of these studies, of course, they are no more mere exercises than are Chopin's *Études*. Miss Marik's readings here as elsewhere are truly admirable, and though the sound of the piano on the review copy seems a bit distant, one's enjoyment of the artist's fine playing is not affected. —D.A.

•
BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica"); Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67; Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Georg Solti. London Stereo CS-6145, -6092, -6093, \$4.98 each.

(*Eroica*)
Walter, Columbia Sym. Orch...Columbia MS-6036 (No. 5)
Reiner, Chicago Sym.....RCA Victor LSC-2343 (No. 7)
Reiner, Chicago Sym.....RCA Victor LSC-1991
Szell, Cleveland Orch.....Epic BC-1066

⑧IT is impossible to categorize Solti's Beethoven, for each of these works is individually conceived. The C minor Symphony is a tautly organized concept, developed in animated and straightforward fashion to the point that the two fermatae of the opening figurations are omitted. Even in the beautifully molded second movement, particular emphasis is placed on brass sonority and cleanness of line. The approach to the Seventh Symphony is vastly different. Consistent with Solti's lyric attitude toward this work, the first two movements are taken at relaxed speed. But even in the two final portions, where greater animation is adopted, the prevailing mood is still lyric, the tonal weight still light. First consideration throughout is accorded phrasings and melodic line rather

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than metric and rhythmic values. In both of these delineations Solti achieves high excellence, in company with both Reiner and Szell. The results with the *Eroica* are, unfortunately, not nearly so persuasive, principally because Solti has yet to meet this titanic work on its own majestic level of profundity and drama, or to supply anything personal that is of equal conviction and validity. Unsolved organizational problems also are evident. In view of the opening movement's length, a slightly faster tempo would have been more judicious, while adherence to the accelerando marked in the coda of the last movement would have provided the positiveness in the finale that a ritard does not. What was merely a liberty in the Seventh Symphony here becomes a bad habit in the repeated exaggeration of the trio in the scherzo. The oddly phrased horn statements only serve to underscore the awkwardness at this point. The engineering of all three performances is up to London's customary high standards. —A.K.

•
BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica")*; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Deutsche Grammophon LPM-18576, \$5.98, or Stereo SLPM-138038, \$6.98 (Import).

Toscanini..... RCA Victor LM-2387
Klemperer..... Angel 35328
Kleiber..... Richmond 19051
Walter..... Columbia ML-5320
Furtwängler..... Electrola 90050

⑤ THIS interpretation compares favorably with the best recorded versions of the *Eroica*. Its most outstanding attribute is the remarkably clear sound of the orchestra—a sound which does the fullest justice to the Berlin Philharmonic. The reading itself is deeply felt, but without the power or dynamism of such as those of Toscanini (the one listed above is the recent Victor broadcast issue, reviewed in March ARG) or Klemperer. Tempi here are more in line with Klemperer's. Fricsay's performance as a whole, in spite of a gripping second movement, seems to these ears a little earthbound. It is a carefully prepared, well executed interpretation which nevertheless fails, for me at least, to become a moving experience. Others may well disagree. —I.K.

BLOCH: *Concerto Grosso No. 1 for String Orchestra with Piano Obligato; Concerto Grosso No. 2 for Strings*; Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra conducted by Howard Hanson. Mercury Stereo SR-90223, \$5.98.

⑧ THE earlier composition in concerto grosso style is a valuable piece of musical property. When the original publisher of the work (Birchard) discontinued his business, all the orchestral works in the catalogue were returned to the composers with one exception—Bloch's, which was sold to another firm. And publishers do not buy twenty-two minute string orchestra works unless there's money in them strings! This music is a magnificent treatment of classic style, displaying a fervent voice in the sophisticated welter of musical attitudes of the current century. Bloch writes with a fresh viewpoint, though his four-movement work is rooted to designs of a time past. Mass-voice writing marks the opening; the "Dirge" is searching, beautiful music. This entire section is one difficult to forget. Swiss recollections are basic to the third movement, and the concerto is completed by an exciting fugue, employing all the manifold techniques of the form. The same type of contemporary intertexture fashioned from classic models serves for the second concerto, the piano in this case being supplanted by a string quartet. The sparing climaxes are not the Bloch of Jewish inspiration but there are Hebraic fertilities within the opus. The composer's technique is resourceful; intellectualism does not rule merely because of the formal objective.

Despite the impressive stereo treatment I find that the most fully-developed performance of the first concerto is still that one by Kubelik and the Chicago Symphony. Hanson's group fails in its *apassionato* thrust. Bloch's piece has guts in addition to verve; failing the former the music sings when it should claw. The same condition makes this performance of the second piece take the same place in relation to the much older M-G-M release under Izler Solomon. The Eastman performers lack urgency; the performance climate is much too temperate. But the sound is again impressive. —A.C.

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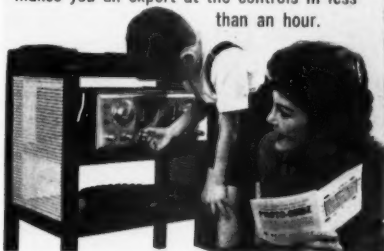
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BOCCHERINI: *Quintet in D for Guitar and Strings*; **HAYDN:** *Quartet for Guitar, Violin, Viola and Cello*; Karl Scheit (guitar) and the Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet. Vanguard VRS-1044, \$4.98.

▲THE vocalistic grace of Boccherini's music contrasts the more formal directness of Haydn. This quintet is a true gem. It is also a document, proving the instrumental knowledge of the composer. The guitar is an instrumental *sotto voce*, is one of five voices and thereby the music has a personality quite different from that of the Haydn quartet, wherein the plucked instrument is set apart, quasi-soloistic. Boccherini had no qualms about featuring the cello (he played this instrument); in this regard Haydn takes second place. And one cannot find the semi-glissando utilized in the final "Fandango" (a marvelous expression, one of the best illustrations of this dance, next to the amazing example in the Soler sonatas) anywhere in Haydn's music. This quintet is no ordinary opus—it is music of deep thought, of substantial meaning. Haydn's quartet was originally for lute and three strings; the substitution of the guitar is propitious. Its form is early-period: two outer fast movements, two minuets (counting inwardly), and, in the center, the slow movement. Haydn may have been cutting his eyeteeth on a new form, since the number of movements stems from the general utility music of the time; the divertimenti, cassations, etc. Little matter—the direct simplicity avoids tradition and convenience by the stimulant of the plectral color. Scheit's playing is a matter of applause: it is classically styled, legati are

not scooped, and the dynamics are vivid. Vanguard's sound is high-quality as well as high-fidelity. —A.C.

•
BRAHMS: *Wir wandelten*, Op. 96, No. 2; *Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen*, Op. 32, No. 2; *Ruhe, Süßliebchen*, Op. 33, No. 9; *Die Mainacht*, Op. 43, No. 2; *Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht*, Op. 96, No. 1; *Unbewegte, laue Luft*, Op. 57, No. 2; *Ständchen*, Op. 106, No. 1; **R. STRAUSS:** *Morgen*, Op. 27, No. 4; *Die Nacht*, Op. 10, No. 3; *Du meines Herzens Krönelein*, Op. 21, No. 2; *Allerseelen*, Op. 10, No. 8; *Die Georgine*, Op. 10, No. 4; *Meinem Kinde*, Op. 37, No. 3; *Traum durch die Dämmerung*, Op. 29, No. 1; *Ständchen*, Op. 17, No. 2; Irmgard Seefried (soprano) and Erik Werba (piano). Decca Deutsche Grammophon Stereo DGS-712018, \$5.98.

⑧AS always Miss Seefried has chosen a delightful program, and she sings it with taste and understanding. I am afraid, however, that something has been happening to her voice recently. In place of the rounded tones that used to be characteristic, even when she soared into the higher reaches, she now has a thin and girlish quality, not unattractive in itself, but quite dangerously limited in range and color capacity. Nor is the tone as even as it really should be throughout its scale. Although her approach to her songs is consistently intelligent and musical, I felt something lacking in most of the Brahms songs. Best of them is *Unbewegte, laue Luft*, in which the strong contrast is well realized.

There is more to admire in her Strauss singing. *Morgen*, as she does it, is not my

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conception of the song, but it is not without validity. Instead of the dreamy, quiet mood one expects, this singer makes of the lied something bright and joyous. She does not keep her singing on a quiet level and blend in with the piano obbligato melody, but definitely takes the lead. Indeed, there is little that suggests *mezza voce* anywhere on the program. I liked her version of *Du meines Herzens Krönlein, Die Georgine, and Meinem Kinde*, all done with fine style. Her *Ständchen* is given a distinctive interpretation, interestingly contrasted with her earlier version in the recorded recital called *Irmgard Seefried in Person* (Decca DL-9809). —P.L.M.

•
BRAHMS: *Piano Quartet No. 3 in C minor, Op. 60*; The Festival Quartet (Szymon Goldberg, violin; William Primrose, viola; Nikolai Graudan, cello; Victor Babin, piano). RCA Victor LM-2330, \$4.98, or Stereo LSC-2330, \$5.98.

Aller, Hollywood Quartet. . . . Capitol PCR-8346
Hess, Szigeti, Katims, Tortelier. Columbia ML-4712
Demus, Barylli Quartet. Westminster XWN-18774

•
⑤MUCH pleasure is afforded by this virtually ideal performance. The players, all highly respected soloists in their own rights, form a perfect ensemble, blending to create an immensely warm, impassioned reading. The recording is a trifle dry but not objectionable, and I certainly hope Victor will give us the remaining two Brahms piano quartets with this fine group. —I.K.

•
BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Josef Krips. London Stereo CS-6110, \$4.98.

Von Karajan, Vienna Phil. . . . RCA Victor LSC-2351

•
⑤THE consistency of Krips' response to any musical premise—his predominantly light-textured strings, cushioned rhythmic definition and accents, scaled-down and softened dynamics—makes it inevitable that he be labeled a light lyric conductor. Unfortunately, there are quite a few other elements in this symphony which here remain unacknowledged. —A.K.

•
BRETON: "*La Verbena de la Paloma*"; Ana Maria Iriarte (Susana); Julita Brenjo (Casta); Ines Rivadeneira

(Señá Rita); Maria Dolores Carpio (Tía Antonia); Manuel Ausensi (Julian); Miguel Liger (Don Hilarión); Rafael Lopez Somoza (Serano); Joaquín Portillo (Don Sebastián); Rafael Campos (Tabernero); Coros Cantores de Madrid (José Perera, director); Gran Orquesta Sinfónica conducted by Ataúlfo Argenta. London Stereo OSA-1102, \$5.98.

•
⑤THE monophonic version of this recording was reviewed in these pages in October of 1958. The work belongs among the better zarzuelas, for Breton (most famous as the composer of "*La Dolores*") took his art more seriously than many of his contemporaries. "*La Verbena de la Paloma*", first given in Madrid on February 19th, 1894, was composed in nineteen days. Breton was pinch-hitting for Ruperto Chapi, who was originally to have composed the music. Rehearing the recording in stereo I find my first impressions confirmed. The cast is a strong one, with the ever admirable Ausensi and Miss Iriarte in evidence, and two amusing buffo singers—Messrs. Liger and Portillo—adding considerably to the fun. The excellent recording is improved by the extra dimension now added. —P.L.M.

•
CHOPIN: *14 Waltzes*; Moura Lympanty (piano). Capitol Stereo SG-7169, \$5.98.

The Same; Witold Malcuzyński (piano).

Angel Stereo S-35726, \$5.98.

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•
⑤BOTH versions are thoroughly idiomatic and differ only in their approaches. Moura Lympanty prefers a more intimate, slightly introverted interpretation which primarily emphasizes the poetic Chopin. Malcuzyński adopts a flashier and basically nineteenth-century manner that occasionally seems a little eccentric but is no less valid. In either case the quality of recording complements the style of performance, Lympanty's piano being reproduced as though in a living room, whereas Malcuzyński's instrument sounds far more brilliant and reverberant. Aside from some shallowness in his piano reproduction, this is a very effective stereo recording, but no more so than Lympanty's natural-sounding disc. Interpretatively, both



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have much to offer, depending on one's personal preference of Chopin style, but I continue to feel that Dinu Lipatti's older (Columbia ML-4522) monophonic version remains unique in its charm and unexaggerated verve.

—I.K.

COPLAND: *Dance Symphony*; **STEVENS:** *Symphony No. 1*; Japan Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra conducted by Akeo Watanabe. Composers Recordings CRI-129, \$4.98.

▲AN interesting combination of early Copland and the music of a rather unknown composer—though Stevens has made a place for himself by his study of "The Life and Music of Béla Bartók" (Oxford). As a writer of music Stevens is first a colorist, second a neutralist. His symphony is well-made, unoriginal, unseeking, but these negative points are somewhat canceled out by a sonorous development that has a certain charming captivity. The composition is pitched at an exciting level (method: *ostinato*) with the utilitarian impetus of rhythm. This last is not square-cut; it has nervous tics which keep one's attention. But beyond this there is nothing more. Conceived in a single span, the symphony shows the composer's learnedness but shows little of his musical personality. This is music that is unidentifiable; it could be the work of anyone. The symphony was composed in 1945. I have heard later pieces by Halsey Stevens; he does not seem to have developed.

Copland's work is an extract from an unpublished ballet, *Grogh*. The symphonic detachment was a result of expediency. RCA Victor had offered \$25,000 (that is no typographical error; it was \$25,000) for a new symphonic work. Copland had decided to enter the competition but the work he had planned was not finished. He therefore extracted three dances from the *Grogh* score and titled them collectively "Dance Symphony" as his entry. The judges found their task somewhat difficult and split the prize money among four composers (Robert Russell Bennett received \$10,000, since he submitted two works). Copland's opus is a commixture of Debussy and Stravinsky. Not until the final section

does the individuality break through; and there, by way of jazz digestions into nervous, asymmetric rhythms. It is music minus the recognized personality of the composer but it is not a student opus. Performances are creditable, though some heavy passages are not at true pitch.—A.C.

•
COWELL: *Music 1957*; **KELLY:** *Symphony No. 2*; Japan Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra conducted by Akeo Watanabe. Composers Recordings CRI-132, \$4.98.

▲NEITHER of these composers has inhibitions. That Henry Cowell never lacked

any is not in the nature of news, but the name of Robert Kelly is a spanking new one to this reviewer and to realize that he, too, is no system-willed creator is a welcome discovery. Kelly is a composer of elastic quality—elastic in the sense that he takes off from a tone-row and wanders nicely afield. His *Symphony* is based on a passage from Genesis and deals with "Seedtime and harvest. . . / Summer and winter. . ." Accordingly, a germinal, dodecaphonic line forms the initial movement, subtitled "Seedtime", and moves into the succeeding portions, which are concerned with qualities descriptive of

From Artia, experimental Enesco

ENESCO: *Octet in C, Op. 7*; String Ensemble of the Rumanian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Constantin Silvestri. Artia ALP-119, \$4.98.

Krueger. NRLP-101

▲COMPARATIVELY little of this brilliant musician's compositions have ever been recorded, except of course for the two Rumanian Rhapsodies, the first of which continues to hold its own in the war horse category. The *Octet*, written in 1905, is a continuous, somewhat rambling work for strings that is divided into four movements, of which the most impressive to me are the lovely slow section and the exciting finale. Enesco's style of composition here is less nationalistic than one might have expected, and there is considerable experimentation with sonorities. In spite of the fact that this *Octet* is relatively unknown in this country, the present disc is the third version made available here;

Krueger's six-year-old performance is presumably still available, but regrettably the composer's own recording (on Remington 199-52) has been withdrawn. The Silvestri reading makes the most, I think, of the possibilities in the score; this is a carefully prepared, exciting interpretation. The recording itself demands a considerable cut in the treble before the string sound approaches the respectable. —I.K.

•
ENESCO: *Symphony No. 1 in E flat, Op. 13*; Rumanian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by George Georgescu. Artia ALP-118, \$4.98.

▲ALONG with the *Op. 7 Octet*, Artia has given us the first recording of Enesco's *Symphony No. 1*, a work which was given its premiere in 1906. Although the familiar Rumanian Rhapsodies antedate the symphony, the latter is not nearly so well organized, nor so Rumanian in flavor, as the shorter pieces. On the whole its music is dramatic but slightly overblown in many places with sections that wander aimlessly. That there is a great deal of originality in Enesco's writing cannot be denied, but at the same time one is aware of a pseudo-Wagnerian approach that stamps the *Symphony* more as an experimental and transitional composition than anything else. The performance is all one could hope for, but the sound is decidedly boxy and somewhat restricted. Altogether, this is an item for the connoisseur. —I.K.



Enesco—Photo by Roger Hauert

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HANDEL: Organ Concerto in F Major—Michael Schneider, organ; Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio; Eugen Jochum, conductor
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BERLIOZ: La Damnation de Faust (Complete)—Consuelo Rubio, mezzo-soprano; Richard Verreau, tenor; Michel Roux, baritone; Pierre Mollet, bass; Choeur Elizabeth Brasseur; Lamoureux Orchestra of Paris; Igor Markevitch, conductor
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summer, harvest, and winter. These are mental lean-tos; actually the symphony is a four-movement, classically-oriented work in design, and carefully plotted as to development processes. The subtitles are general descriptions, the arena and décor in which the music will pass and perform. Program music is not the objective. The concentration of Kelly's writing is good, his use of color and orchestration effect is quietly luxuriant and controlled. It is a worth-while work and a crystal-clear conception; the fricative harmonies only point up the music's interweave. Many works by better-known composers are far less telling than this one.

Cowell's music—"made in America, composed in Tokyo"—is of wit, good fun, and healthy devotion to treading lightly (with folk slippers) in the halls of orchestral composition. Not that all orchestral music is "heavy", but the supposition still remains in all too many minds that it should be. That it can be almost anything, including Cowell's semi-home-spun music, is always refreshing. "Music 1957" is informative in two ways—it gives both the title and year of composition, the working material is a jiggy tune, sometimes given a sophisticated touch by being surrounded with a dissonant, calliope effect; to this Cowell contrasts a lyrical theme, a hybrid of Irish-Western U. S. A. culture; the last dunked into a sauce that is sometimes sweet, sometimes sour. No inhibitions, as I said. The plentiful percussion (not only as rhythmic supports, but also as a solo functioning group) is further evidence. Henry Cowell's is a healthy art. —A.C.

HANDEL: *Concerto for No. 1 in G minor Harpsichord and Orchestra, Op. 4; Suite No. 7 in G minor; Air and Variations in B flat*; Sylvia Marlowe (harpsichord), conducting a baroque chamber orchestra (in Concerto). Decca Stereo DL-710020, \$5.98.

(Suite No. 7)

Wolfe Expériences Anonymes EA-0038

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⑤WERE one to follow the score of the G minor Concerto (more familiarly known as a work for organ and orchestra) without reference to the excellent program notes on

the jacket, the average listener would probably be considerably jolted. There seems to be little relation between the notes of the solo instrument on the printed page and what Miss Marlowe actually plays. What she has done, of course, is to fill in harmonies, embellish, and otherwise add to the original part in accordance with the accepted practices of Handel's time. It is not only effective but also quite exciting to hear, and the disc is an excellent example of the recent return to this style of re-creation by performers and scholars. The magnificent Seventh Suite is treated similarly, as may be heard for example in the *Sarabande*, where Miss Marlowe has added her embellishments for the repeats. The short *Air and Variations* (Brahms used the theme for his Op. 24 variations), strangely enough is left quite unadorned to the detriment of the piece. The performances, with the latter exception, are in Miss Marlowe's customary vital style, and her registration is extremely varied. The sound of her instrument, as well as that of the small chamber orchestra, has been very well captured in the stereo recording.

—I.K.

HANDEL: *Six Organ Concerti, Op. 4; Six Organ Concerti, Op. 7*; Karl Richter (Organ of St. Mark's Church, Munich) conducting a chamber orchestra. London Stereo set CSA-2302, six sides, \$14.94.

(Nos. 1-4, Op. 4)

Müller, Wenzinger Archive ARC-3100

(Op. 4 & Op. 7, complete)

Biggs, Boulton Columbia 6K2S-602 & 604

⑤THOSE who would like to own the twelve marvelous Handel Op. 4 and Op. 7 organ concerti in stereo are most enthusiastically advised to obtain this set, for with but few exceptions about the performance this is a delightful interpretation that has received a simply stunning recording. Richter's general attitude toward these works is quite correct insofar as baroque interpretative practices are concerned, and he has embellished the bare organ part very capably in most cases. There are a few places where I feel he could have gone much further, and where the solo instrument does little beyond playing the printed notes. Other sections, however, show a great deal of imagination on

Richter's part, as for example the second movement (marked *organo ad lib*) of Op. 7, No. 3, where he has interpolated an adagio and fugue. Certain passages which are in the French style are not double-dotted as required, yet again other sections (e. g., the opening of Op. 4, No. 2) are executed perfectly. Tempi are in almost all cases intelligent, although again such movements as the *Andante* of Op. 4, No. 4, or the second and fourth movements of the fifth concerto in the same opus are too slow for my taste. Even though more ornamentation, particularly in cadential passages, could be desired, these lively and well-prepared performances (even a harpsichord continuo is utilized) will give much pleasure; if it does not have quite the stylistic flair that graces the Müller Archive version, it does have the advantage of being sensationally recorded in stereo. One isolated example of this that should convince anyone is the lovely solo violin and cello duet in the first movement of Op. 4, No. 3, in which each instrument is clearly separated. Recommended. —I.K.

•
HANDEL: *Water Music Suite* (Arr. Harty); *Royal Fireworks Music Suite* (Arr. Harty); *Overture in D minor* (Arr. Elgar); *Overture to "Samson"* (Arr. Sargent); *Royal Philharmonic Orchestra* conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Capitol Stereo SG-7202, \$5.98.

(*Water Music, Fireworks*)
Ormandy.....Columbia ©MS-6095
Dotari.....Mercury ©90158
S. ORCHESTRAL sound via four transcriptions is the primary interest in this Handel collection. This is the "beef-eating" variety of interpretation, and given recording such as this it is very effective indeed. The orchestra is distant, but its sound is quite full and extremely smooth. Sir Malcolm, of course, has been closely identified with this music, and has recorded both suites previously. The *Overture in D minor* was transcribed from the second of Handel's Chandos Anthems (it is also contained in the fifth Concerto Grosso of Op. 3). The playing is hearty and thoroughly enjoyable, transcriptions or no, and the stereo is exemplary. —I.K.

•
HAYDN: *Concerto for Horn and Orchestra in D; Concerto for Trumpet and*

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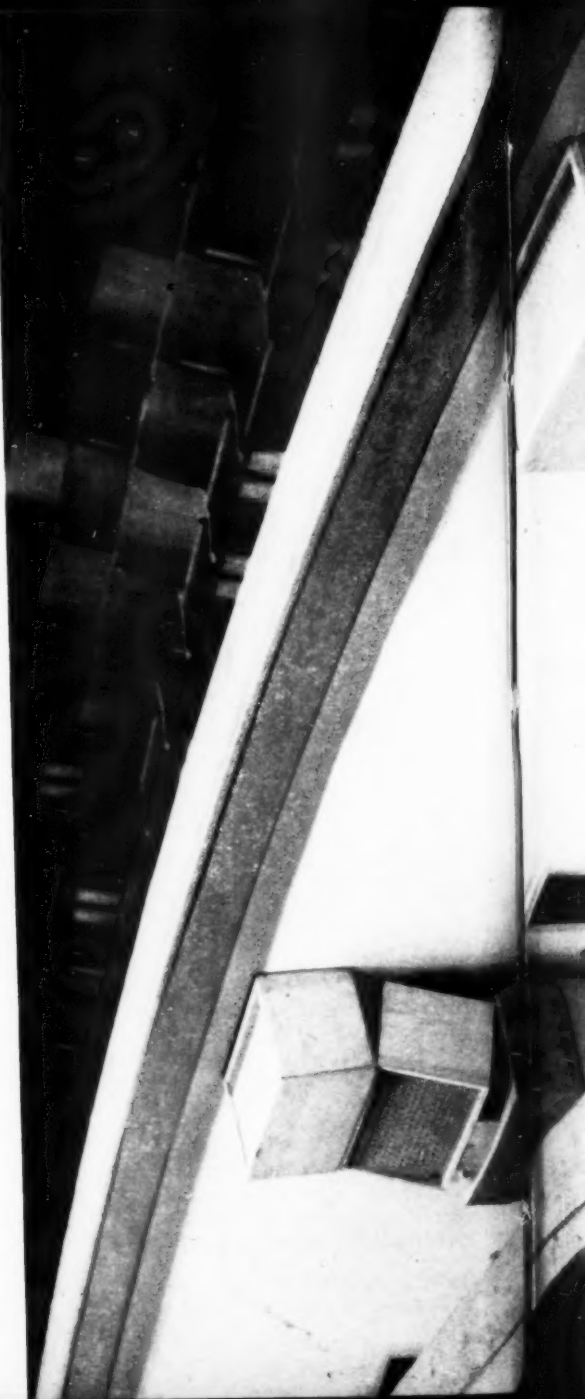
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(Trumpet Concerto)
 Longinotti, Ansermet.....London ©6091
 Voisin, Dickson.....Kapp ©9017-S

§IN both cases we have very satisfactory performances that do not achieve quite the ultimate in refinement. The solo instruments are well caught in the stereo recording, and the balance among the various sections of the chamber orchestra is excellent. The delightful trumpet concerto in particular has received a smoother, more polished, and graceful reading in other versions, but the present performance will give much enjoyment especially because it is stylistically so well executed. The sound is quite good, although the surfaces on my review copy were noisy. —I.K.

●
HOLST: *The Planets, Op. 32*; B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and Women's

Chorus conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Capitol Stereo SG-7196, \$5.98. Stokowski.....Capitol ©SP-8389

§THE very opening of *Mars* sounds as though the orchestra is at least two city blocks away, but aside from the extremely distant microphone placement this is a very thrillingly recorded performance. The playing is exceptionally smooth, and tempi are admirable. Sargent's conducting is worthy of the highest praise, and one is tempted to single out many of the outstanding moments such as the stirring "English" tune of *Jupiter*, the powerful mood of *Saturn*, or the effect of the women's voices in space at the conclusion of *Nephtune*. This performance is far more faithful to the score than the equally exciting but all too frequently exaggerated version by Stokowski, and Boult's new stereo interpretation on Westminster (quite different from his highly effective previous versions) is disappointing on all counts. This Capitol recording may be highly recommended. —I.K.

Zaremba—rare and intoxicating

§ABOUT a year and a half has elapsed since the release of Miss Zaremba's previous recording—a Brahms album on the now defunct Unicorn label. Appraising her artistry on that disc in the January, 1959, issue, this listener found that "her tonal power and control of it are such that any man could well envy." From an interpretative standpoint, her playing evinced "keen feeling and a delicate ability

to shade (not always applied)"; however, the pianist in another recording reviewed at the same time displayed "a greater logic in organization and a generally subtler dynamic vocabulary." In the many months since the appearance of this critique, the growth in Miss Zaremba's artistry has been astonishing. Together with the power and spontaneity of old, the playing on these records shows the deepest stylistic perception and poetic sensitivity. Most fascinating to me is the approach to Debussy and Ravel, which, while on the level of a Giesecking, is entirely Miss Zaremba's own. Unlike the late German pianist, whose crystal-clear impressionism utilized the pedal very sparingly, these performances rely as much on the feet as on the hands to create intoxicating atmosphere and a wealth of contrasting color. Only the *Scarbo* of Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* could be a bit more animated and impetuous. But this is in no way meant to detract from what is a rare and extraordinary listening experience. The

LISZT: *Mephisto Waltz; Étude de Concert in F minor; Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104; Sonetto del Petrarca No. 123; Caprice in A minor after Paganini; Valse Oubliée; Transcendental Étude in F minor; Étude in D flat (Un Sospiro)*; Sylvia Zaremba (piano). Realistic Stereo RSLP-93L101, \$5.95.

RAVEL: *Sonatine; Jeux D'Eau; Gaspard de la Nuit*; **DEBUSSY:** *Feux D'Artifice*; Sylvia Zaremba (piano). Realistic Stereo RSLP-93L102, \$5.95.



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command of technique, bravura, and the expressive refinements of the Lisztian idiom are no less gratifying. Miss Zarembo's interpretation of the *Mephisto Waltz* is all but the equal of the unforgettable

version by Kapell (who brought an added quality of diabolical whimsy), which is to say that it has no equal today. Beautiful reproductions, all—at least in stereo. No mono copies were received. —A.K.

Reiner's Mahler Fourth

By JACK DIETHER

STEREO sound enhances the wit of Mahler's Fourth, just as it did the cosmic drama of his Fifth Symphony (see the ARG for September, 1959). This wit is conveyed not only by the unexpected shifts in Mahler's harmonic, melodic and metric viewpoint, but also in the very sounds of his instruments—in the interplay of their distinctive personalities, which were never more individualized than in this symphony. So naturally, the greater isolation of the instrumental voices in space tends to augment that individuality, no less than with the much admired separation of the protagonists in stereo opera. Take the horns, which have an unusually prominent voice in this composition. The Fourth is the only Mahler symphony conceived entirely without trombones or tuba, giving it a classical lightness of texture in its loudest tutti which is itself distinctive in his work. But brass sounds, solo and ensemble, are no less prominent for that, and so the horns are raised to a still more honored position. Just follow the sardonically hoarse voice of the solo horn, for example, as it threads its way through the texture of the first movement in RCA's new stereo version, its every note, however soft, manifesting its rightful place in a harmonious ensemble. The same solo horn tone is just as distinctive in the ensuing *Scherzo*, and here the satire is additionally heightened by the introduction of the bizarre "tuned-up"

violin, "*wie eine Fiedel*". The further advent, following the beautiful half-cadence of the *Adagio* movement, of the soprano voice for the finale is simply a verbal articulation of the same principle, really: that of the new contrapuntal protagonist with a distinctive point of view.

Nothing could illustrate the fascinating combination of improvisatory and long-range imagination in Mahler better than the history of this song-finale. In its composition, the song antedates not only the other movements of the Fourth, but the entire Third Symphony as well. In fact, it was published as early as 1892, as one of five *Wunderhorn*-derived "Songs of Good Cheer" (*Gesänge guter Laune*). Shortly after, Mahler planned his Third Symphony as a seven-movement work, including three vocal movements (the fourth, fifth, and seventh), and ending with this song, *Das himmlische Leben*. He also anticipated thematic elements of it in the second and fifth movements. But when he had neared the end of the *Adagio* (sixth movement), the already tremendously long symphony seemed complete without the final song; and so he began composing a new symphony around (or in front of) it. Again the original plan called for three vocal movements, this time as the even-numbered sections in a six-movement work. But now Mahler compressed his plan instead of expanding it internally, even to removing the original *Scherzo* (later to become the *Scherzo* of the Fifth) and composing a smaller one in its place. The elimination of the other two vocal movements left him with a four-movement "*Humoreske*" (as he originally called it) about half the length of the Third—and this is what we now know simply as the Fourth Symphony. Thus, after eight pro-

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 4 in G*; Lisa Della Casa (soprano), Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor LM-2364, \$4.98, or ©LSC-2364, \$5.98.

Halban, Walter, N. Y. Phil. Columbia 4031
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ductive years, the entire double cycle finally ended with the song that engendered it!

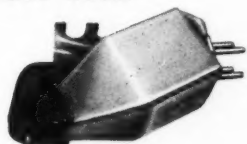
For my taste, Fritz Reiner catches the lilt of this joyful work better than any conductor since Eduard Van Beinum, from the first sound of flutes and sleighbells to the final throb of the low harp and contre-basses. And with the elimination of the long-serviceable Van Beinum recording from the active lists, it is cheering indeed to welcome the arrival of a version eminently fit to take its place—with the added benefit of resilient and distortionless stereophony for those equipped to utilize it. Fact is, it's a pretty heart-warming

sound either way. And Lisa Della Casa is simply—if you will pardon the only expression that seems really applicable to the text—out of this world! Who does not feel, in listening to this symphony, "*dass alles für Freuden, für Freuden erwacht*"?

•
MENDELSSOHN: *Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64*; **BRUCH:** *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26*; Julian Olevsky (violin); Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Julius Rudel. Westminster Stereo WST-14080, \$5.98.

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It takes reality of technique, reasoning of style to combine as the basic springboard for the personality to emerge. If anyone shines in this recording, however, it is conductor Rudel rather than virtuoso Olevsky. The former makes the background an extremely valuable part of the musical journey; the latter is a guide who has uttered the same words so long that they tend to be uttered monotonously. Olevsky simply does not display enough profile to make us listen very attentively to the Mendelssohn or the Bruch. Must there be such multitudinous duplication? Please excuse my lack of excitement. As indicated, I am rather pleased with the artistic thrust and subtle power that Rudel extracts from the orchestral accompaniments. Otherwise, I would rather reach for Francescatti and Milstein, among others.

—A.C.

MIASKOVSKY: *Symphony For Band in E Flat, Op. 46 (Symphony No. 19)*; Moscow State Band conducted by Ivan Petrov; **BALAKIREV-CASELLA:** *Islamey*; State Radio Orchestra conducted by Alexander Gauk; **MUS-SORGSKY:** *Introduction and Hopak from "The Fair at Sorochintsy"*; **PAK-HMUTOVA:** *Youth Overture*; State Radio Orchestra conducted by Alexei Beloussov; **KNIPPER:** *Youth Overture*; State Radio Orchestra conducted by Alexander Gauk. Monitor MC-2038, \$4.98.

▲IF you collect symphonic band and/or Miaskovsky, one-half of this record may be for you—if you don't mind the other half being miscellany by miscellany. The Miaskovsky themes are the work of a master theoretician, i.e., gay on paper only in the opening and closing *Maestosi*, but very sad-sack in the elongate *legatissimo* of movement three, calling to mind the Salvation rather than the Red Army to which the opus was dedicated in 1939. Movement two is basically Satie with a few more modern touches, and is easily the most appealing. An exciting performance of Casella's virtuoso orchestration of *Islamey* is hampered by an unresonant recording that is better elsewhere in this concert. The two "Youth"

Overtures are buoyant with sound-track tunes.

—J.B.L.

RAVEL: *Gaspard de la Nuit; Le Tombeau de Couperin*; Charles Rosen (piano); Epic LC-3589, \$4.98.

Gieseking.....Angel 3541-5s
Casadesus.....Columbia ML-4518/20

▲ROSEN makes an excellent impression in these two works, although his approach is somewhat over-intellectual. Stylistically his performance is superior, his technical control quite masterful. Virtuosity, indeed, is one of the primary attributes for the ideal performance of this music, and in that respect Rosen is remarkably equipped, as may be heard for example in the Toccata from *Le Tombeau* or *Scarbo* from *Gaspard de la Nuit*. In the latter piece, however, I feel that the playing is directed toward achieving excitement rather than atmosphere, and both Gieseking and Casadesus have more to offer in their interpretations in this respect. Unfortunately charm, too, is a little underplayed in the present disc, and that is one of the basic elements in the composer's style. All in all, in spite of these criticisms, the performance does great credit to Rosen. The piano sound is excellent except for slight distortion at the conclusion of *Le Tombeau*.

—I.K.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade, Op. 35*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Lovro Von Matacic. Angel Stereo S-35767, \$5.98.

Beecham.....Angel ⑤S-35505
Monteux.....RCA Victor ⑤LSC-2208

⑤AMONG the many, many monophonic recordings of *Scheherazade* plus the ever more numerous stereo versions, this latest effort can certainly be considered one of the very best. It is well paced, exciting, and extremely well performed save for one mishap in the final section, just at the transition to the sea episode. Here a trumpet momentarily, and very obviously, plays a wrong note (F sharp instead of E), with a rather shocking effect in these days of tape-editing perfection. The monophonic edition, interestingly, does not contain the error. The stereo recording features a somewhat distant orchestra, but the effects are all there. Beecham's in-

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JOAN SUTHERLAND

terpretation continues to be my preference, but the present reading is well worth hearing. —I.K.

●
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Suite from "Le Cœq d'Or"; Russian Easter Overture, Op. 36*; **GLINKA:** *"Russlan and Ludmilla" Overture*; Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5414, \$4.98.

("Cœq d'Or" *Suite, Russian Easter*)

Fiedler, Boston Pops. Victor LM-2100, 2202
▲ORMANDY'S well-known flair for this idiom and his fabulous orchestra's seemingly inexhaustible expressive vocabulary combine to provide performances of ravishing opulence. Only Fiedler among contemporary stylists does as well. The monitor and the other gremlins who have so plagued Philadelphia reproductions all stayed home this time; the sound is perfect. —A.K.

●
ROSSINI: *Overtures—"William Tell"; "Semiramide"; "Barber of Seville"; "The Thieving Magpie"; "Cenerentola"*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jonel Perlea. Vox (Stereovox) STPL-511,180, \$5.95.

Toscanini, NBC Sym. (mono). . . RCA Vic. LM-2040
Reiner, Chicago Sym. Orch. . . . RCA Vic. LSC-2318

⑤LITTLE of the intrinsic spirit and humor of these overtures is revealed under Perlea's humorless and pedantic direction. Toscanini and Reiner conveyed this music best. —A.K.

●
SCHUBERT: *String Quartet in D minor, Op. Posth; Quartettsatz in C minor, Op. Posth*; Juilliard String Quartet. RCA Victor LM-2378, \$4.98, or Stereo LSC-2378, \$5.98

The Same; Amadeus Quartet. Decca/Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft Stereo DGS-712037, \$5.98.

⑤THE release of a recording by the Juilliard foursome is always a welcome event. Few chamber-music organizations show the inner logic demonstrated by these four artists. So many quartets engage in compromise, projecting personalities or displaying instrumental egos at the expense of the music, and the medium is not for showmanship. It is the ideal way to display style and form, but pompous pedantry or ill-proportioned interpretation become

severely spotlighted. Regardless of the fact that no one performance is the authentic one, the highly developed sense of the Juilliard Quartet sets a standard here that is treasurable. The Amadeus is professional, but quite methodical. They reproduce a facsimile of the "Death and the Maiden" in place of an experienced dissertation.

There is no better evidence of this than the variations of the second movement. These are old-fashioned in the sense that there is no attempt to lose the theme by development. Despite the more primitive approach to the form, the five variations are extraordinarily beautiful, but only if the playing is spontaneous. The Amadeus play well, but conventionally; the Juilliard play dramatically, thereby authenticating the immediacy of the music. In the last movement, tempo is the fruitful weapon. Counterpoint may not be in a secondary position, but the melodic and harmonic elements are dominant. Check the propulsive drive and the music can almost become monotonous. Here again the Juilliard set flame to the music while the Amadeus treat it with a light glaze. In the opening movement an interesting comparison is afforded by the first violinists in the performance of the minuscule quasi-cadenza bridge passage that connects thematic material. Robert Mann of the Juilliard gives it a persuasiveness that smooths out the kinks, whereas the Amadeus violinist describes it in a very stilted, academic manner. It is simply a matter of dimensions. The Juilliard do not limit their range and the Amadeus do, in comparison with the better vision the Americans possess.

Matters are more even in the quartet movement ("Satz"). The "sister under the skin" relationship to the beginning of the "Unfinished" is properly turbulent, and both teams convey the intense inspirational mood of the legato ideas. The absence of any mention of the other string quartet movement that exists (completed by Alfred Orel of Vienna and so published) must be noted. Neither annotator speaks of it. Nor are any recordings available. It is a genuine Schubert opus and deserves its place in the recorded literature. —A.C.

SCHUMANN: *Kinderszenen, Op. 15;*
DEBUSSY: *Children's Corner Suite;*
KABALEVSKY: *Children's Pieces (Little Rondo; A Short Story, Op. 27; Toccatina, Op. 27; Dance on the Lawn, Op. 27; The Clown, Op. 39; A Little Joke (Scherzino), Op. 27); Sonatina in C, Op. 13, No. 1; Yakov Zak (piano, in Debussy and Schumann); Dmitri Kabalevsky (piano, in Kabalevsky). Monitor MC-2039, \$4.98.*


(Schumann)
 Gieseeking.....Angel 35321
 Novaes.....Vox 11169
 Horowitz.....RCA Victor LVT-1032
 (Debussy)
 Gieseeking.....Angel 35067

▲**KABALEVSKY'S** playing is delightful and may be considered to be authoritative. Yakov Zak, a Russian virtuoso whose enormous skill has been somewhat slighted in this country in favor of his famous compatriots, performs both Debussy and most particularly the Schumann with uncommon interpretative insight. The *Scenes from Childhood*, especially, are done with great sensitivity, simplicity, and a wonderful feeling for color. His reading of the *Children's Corner Suite*, however, does not really match that of Gieseeking; for all his impressive technical ability, Zak fails to capture the subtleties in the music. Sound throughout is quite good. —I.K.

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphony No. 5, Op. 47; New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Columbia ML-5445, \$4.98.*

Mitropoulos, N. Y. Phil.....Columbia ML-4739

▲**BERNSTEIN'S** performance is like a huge wave that sweeps everything before it. Intensity is built upon intensity in an interpretation of spectacular dramatic effectiveness. Whether or not this is what the composer had in mind is something else again. The tempi for the entire opening statement of the last movement, and also for the coda in which it is reiterated, are rather remote from the 88-to-the-quarter indicated in the text. For me, the greater animation robs this climactic movement of the somber dignity and drama it would otherwise have. Yet one cannot remain indifferent to the swell of brilliant sound, nor deny its impact. I admit to having been swept with the tide, but my affection and preference for



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Mitropoulos' less frenzied but still dramatic, subtler, and deeper treatment remains undiminished. —A.K.

R. STRAUSS: *Ein Heldenleben*, Op. 40; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan; Michel Schwalbé (violin solo). Decca/Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft Stereo DGS-712022, \$5.98.

Ludwig..... Everest 3038

⑤IN spite of Karajan's masterly handling of this score, the stereo recording is regrettably not very satisfactory. First, the level is extremely low, with a resulting increase in surface noise that becomes quite disturbing, at least on my review copy. Secondly, the orchestra has been recorded at a considerable distance, so that what should be a rich and full-bodied sound emerges slightly pale and emaciated. True, certain orchestral details, such as individual woodwinds, are beautifully clear, but in climaxes the glorious Strauss sound is simply not there. Side two fares considerably better (beginning of the battle), and the music cannot help but excite the

listener, although here again the massed sound is too diffused for my taste. About Karajan's treatment of the score there could be nothing but praise, but for *Heldenleben* in stereo, the Everest recording must take first place. —I.K.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker*, Op. 71: *Suites Nos. 1 and 2*; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London Stereo CS-6097, \$4.98.

Fiedler, Boston Pops..... RCA Victor LSC-2052
⑤THESE excerpts are taken from the recently issued album of the complete ballet. The Suite No. 1 contains the usual *Overture Miniature* and *divertissements* (*March*, *Sugar Plum Fairy Variation*, *Trepak*, *Danse Arabe*, *Danse Chinoise*, *Dance of the Mirlitons*, and *Waltz of the Flowers*), while the "Suite No. 2" in this case consists of three lengthy chunks of the score plus the *Grand Pas de Deux* (no male variation or coda) from the second act. The three extensive portions are: (1) Act 1—The presentation of the nutcracker, Clara's Variation, the children's games and Fritz's attempt to snatch the nutcracker, and the Grandfather's Dance; (2) Opening Prelude of Act 2, presentation of Clara to the court, and the *Spanish Dance*; (3) *Grande Valse* and concluding Apotheosis. Programmed on the jacket but not included is the Snow Scene from Act 1. Interpretatively, the results in the First Suite are quite good, excepting an unatmospheric and characterless *Danse Arabe* and a *Sugar Plum Fairy's Variation* offered here in its original form with an *allegro* coda. By adhering to the 80-to-the-quarter-note written in the score, Ansermet effectively proves how justified the liberty of a much slower tempo is in both balletic and symphonic usage. The greater animation robs this interlude of its subjective character, delicacy, and charm.

In the Second Suite, Ansermet fares less well. The *Spanish Dance* from the opening of Act Two also lacks character and atmosphere. All is fine in the *Grand Pas de Deux* until the descending scalewise passages of the trumpets and trombones just prior to the climactic restatement of the main theme. At this point (of all places) Ansermet suddenly lets dramatic tension sag.

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The entire recapitulation is anti-climactic. The final *Valse* also suffers from lack of sweep and weight. Those interested in excerpts rather than the full score are commended to the efforts of Fiedler and the Boston Pops, who still do best by this music. No fault can be found with London's engineering. —A.K.

•
VIVALDI: *Sonata in A, Op. 2, No. 2*;
BIBER: *Sonata in C minor (arr. David)*;
HAYDN: *Sonata in G, Op. 70*; **MO-**
ZART: *Sonata in G, K. 301*; Louis
Gabowitz (violin); Harriet Parker
Salerno (piano). Bruno BR-14037,
\$3.98 or Stereo SBR-32001, \$4.98.

(Vivaldi)
Milstein, Pommers.....Cap. P-8481, SP-8481
(Mozart)
Grumiaux, Haskil.....Epic LC-3602, BC-1034
⑤THE names of Gabowitz and Salerno were totally unfamiliar to me prior to receiving this record. The recital is a pleasant surprise. The violinist plays with a sure technical grasp, while his partner's small-scale playing is neat and accomplished. The interpretations stay on the surface, making for a lack of genuine differentiation between the varied compositional styles; but this is not crippling to the whole. The best playing comes in the lovely Haydn sonata, which bears a more than casual resemblance to the earlier Mozart sonata in the same key. The first movement of the Vivaldi is somewhat rushed; the Biber finds the violinist straining. Although this is not the work of major performers, the playing is warm and communicative. The sound is quite clear, although there is excessive separation in the stereo. —H.G.

•
WEBER: *Overtures—"Euryanthe"; "Be-*
herrscher der Geister"; "Abu Hassan";
"Jubel"; "Der Freischütz"; "Preciosa";
"Oheron"; Philharmonia Orchestra con-
ducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. Angel
35754, \$4.98.

Toscanini, NBC Sym.....RCA Victor LM-6026
▲SAWALLISCH'S thoroughly German background would seem to make him a "natural" for this repertoire. The phlegmatic and dynamically unimaginative concepts that he offers suggest otherwise. The best Weber on records is still that of the late Arturo Toscanini. —A.K.

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HOMIS, Vol. VIII

By ALAN RICH

FOR THOSE unacquainted with this admirable project, let me just say that each of the eight volumes now available in the series is designed to accompany the respective volumes of the "New Oxford History of Music" now being published. When the books have all appeared (only the first two have, so far) we will thus have access to a dimension in the dissemination of the history of music that will point up one of the major values of recording and enlightened musicology today. Since the recording project is under the direction of the distinguished Gerald Abraham, there seems little reason to doubt that all is being done to make the result completely trustworthy. For once that tired old adjective "definitive" seems to make sense. The elegance in performance and recording is matched by splendid thick booklets that accompany each album, providing large chunks of printed music, complete texts, and admirable essays.

One might have reason to question the value of the later volumes in the project, however, in terms of the amount of music otherwise available on records, and of the need for providing excerpts rather than complete works. Obviously these are not discs for idle listening. Mr. Abraham is aware of this problem, to be sure, and very little, if any, familiar ground is retraced in the present album. Instead, we are able to sample for the first time the essence of Cherubini's heroic operatic

style (which we cannot from the uncharacteristic and mangled "*Medea*"), a remarkable moment from a Spohr opera which Wagner surely had taken to heart, parallel settings by Schubert and one of his contemporaries of the same text, some enchanting precursors of the best salon style of Chopin's piano music, and—probably most wonderful of all—a generous serving from the famous but seldom-performed "*Otello*" of Rossini.

Thus, no matter how familiar you may be with the riches that Mr. Schwann provides from the Age of Beethoven, there is much to be discovered in this album. It would be asking too much, perhaps, to expect that the amazing bit of drama from Spohr's "*Jessonda*" will someday smoke out a full performance of this colorful exotic pageant, but at least we can learn that, far from the model of Victorian propriety and blandness that is our usual picture of Spohr, he had some striking harmonic ideas and some really advanced conceptions of orchestration. Zumsteeg's setting of Kosegarten's *Nachtgesang* is a lovely and moving nocturne, but Schubert retraces the same ground with an infinitely richer palette. John Field splashes a brief divertimento with showers of pianistic spangles and some grand tunes, but cannot get from A to B without pausing for breath. Clementi, on the other hand, strikes out for new things to say, and new ways of saying them, that should elevate him to the fore among early romantic composers for piano, for those who care to listen.

The excerpt from "*Otello*" covers most of the third act—an offstage song for a gondolier, and then Desdemona's long, elaborate, and immensely haunting "Willow Song", a moment that will not replace Verdi's conception, but which on its own is high art, especially the way Nan Merriman sings it here. Among the other singers involved in various excerpts are Henri Legay, Alexander Young and Nancy Evans, and they are all fine.

The original HMV issue of these discs covered five sides. Victor, which obviously abhors a vacuum, has merely repeated several "highlights" from the set to fill its last side. The whyness is beyond me.

The History of Music in Sound, Volume VIII, "The Age of Beethoven"; Lamar Crowson and Robert Collet (pianos); Lore Fischer (contralto); Michael Langdon (bass); London String Trio; Melos Ensemble; Allegri String Quartet; and operatic ensembles conducted by Pierre Dervaux, Lawrence Collingwood, Mosco Carner and Walter Susskind. Victor set LM-6146, six sides (mono only), \$15.98.

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SOUND IDEAS

An Equipment Review

By LARRY ZIDE

EICO 70-Watt Stereo High-Fidelity Dual Power Amplifier, Model HF-87

SOME TIME ago EICO submitted for evaluation this power amplifier as well as its HFT-90 FM tuner and HFT-94 AM tuner. Regrettably I have not completed construction and testing of the tuners, so that they must be deferred until next month's column. I have had the HF-87 Stereo Power Amplifier in operation for a good while now and its evaluation is herewith submitted.

By way of description the HF-87 is a dual-channel power amplifier of 35 honest watts per channel. It features self-biased EL-34s for output, a low-impedance silicon diode rectification system, and generally a conservative, durable design.

The HF-87 is, like all EICO units, available factory-wired or in kit form.

EICO makes a big advertising point of the fact that there is no printed circuitry in its kits. To clear up this point let me state that, from the point of view of the novice builder, printed circuits are, of course, a way to simplified construction. Used in the first stages of an amplifier, for

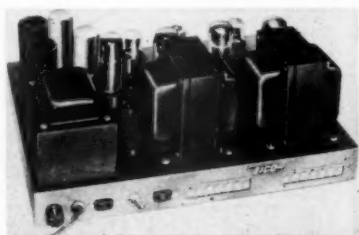
instance, they tend to avoid the often cramped wiring that must be done in these quarters. Another advantage is that in these first stages lead dress is fairly important. Printed boards would tend to insure a more uniform product.

Point-to-point wiring, on the other hand, has the distinct advantage of being more durable, less expensive, and, if properly designed, more conducive to quick service. If wiring is carefully done, with the wiring diagrams properly followed, equally good results can be had with point-to-point and printed boards.

One way to make point-to-point wiring a pleasure is to provide a generous chassis. This EICO has done. The HF-87 has no difficult corners or cramped, busy tube sockets. The construction manual, as with all EICO books, is excellent, with an abundance of illustrations. The kit took me just over eight leisurely hours to construct and I found no errors in the book except that on page 11c, instruction 7, it may be necessary to run several of these

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wires outside of the clamp in order to reach their destination. And it would be better in step 2 on page 5c to cut the brown-yellow and brown leads of T1 about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch longer than indicated.

The HF-87 is easy to construct. I would recommend it to a novice without qualification. When a kit is finished, it is a real joy to connect it and find that it works perfectly. This, EICO kits have done consistently for me.

In August of 1959 I reported on the EICO HF-35, a monophonic 35-watt power amplifier. The HF-87 is essentially two of these mono amplifiers on a single chassis, sharing a common power supply. Additionally, all the sonic virtues of the mono version are shared by the new product. I found the HF-87 an excellent amplifier in every respect. Sound was clean, with an ease of reproduction that was a pleasure. Even with the lowest-efficiency speakers the amplifier was up to most of the demands I could place on it. Used with electrostatic speakers the HF-87 showed no tendency to disintegrate in the

upper frequencies as unstable amplifiers will. High power is especially desirable with very-wide-range speakers, in particular the low-efficiency variety. Power is needed for the extreme bass region more than elsewhere, and it is here that the high-powered amplifiers show what they can do. The EICO has a firm, clear, solid bass that is a joy to listen to. (As I was working on this review, EICO announced a new stereo amplifier, this one with 50 watts per channel. It appears to be similar in construction to the HF-87, and is likely to be of similar quality. The prime advantage of this kind of power is better extreme-bass response as well as better distortion figures at normal listening levels).

One other feature makes the HF-87 the value it is. In fact, at a price just under \$75 this amplifier almost assumes bargain proportions. Combining excellent reproduction quality with exceptional input sensitivity is no small trick. EICO is to be commended on this product. I recommend it without reservation.

Audax Speaker Systems, Models CA-100 and CA-60

(Illustrated on pages following)

AUDAX, a name that was at one time known for high-quality magnetic cartridges and arms, is now the speaker division of Rek-O-Kut, a company that needs no introduction to high-fidelity fans. The two systems submitted for this review are respectively the most expensive (CA-100) and lowest-priced (CA-60) complete systems in the Audax line. Both are also, as the pictures show, products of high style.

CA-100

Inside the oiled walnut cabinet are four speakers, two ten-inch high-compliance woofers and two small cone tweeters mounted at opposite ends of the cabinet. The woofers feature what Audax calls Paraflex Foam Suspension. This is a ring of foam compound which joins the cone of

the speaker to the frame. It allows for a free and yet controlled movement of the cone, thus allowing for deep bass from a relatively small speaker.

The box is of ducted port design, with the slot placed between the two bass speakers. This system helps provide deep bass from a small box while maintaining a high order of efficiency in the system. The CA-100 can be powered by a clean ten-watt amplifier, although I would suggest higher power if a very large room must be filled with a high level of sound.

Once again, I feel impelled to stress the heavy subjectivity of any speaker review. I can report a lack of frequency response, or a serious resonant condition, or some other actual defect, but the over-all impression that a speaker makes is force

highly personal. It is possible to dislike the quality of sound from an excellent speaker (this is not the case here) or to like the quality of a lesser speaker (this is the case with the CA-60). In short, except for gross disqualification of a speaker on some tangible grounds, the sound of this kind of transducer seems to me very much a matter of taste, as criteria now stand.

After extensive use of the CA-100 in my home, I must report that it is a fine system indeed. It has a firm, clear bass that extends almost to the extreme bottom. Middle and high frequencies are complementary to the bass quality and extend to beyond audibility. Instruments are brought forward and almost thrust at the listener. The quality is not unlike that of the better electrostatic tweeters, in effect. Sound was exceptionally clear and clean with only a touch of hardness in the very upper frequencies. These upper frequencies were dispersed fairly well, thus preventing the system from having a small box sound.

Some crude frequency runs, by ear, showed no tendency for the CA-100 to double in the lower frequencies. Response in my room extended cleanly with no serious resonance to below forty cycles. Upper frequency response was smooth, with a somewhat rising tendency. This gave the system a bright, "live" quality that is often desired.

I found the system pleasant to listen to; for me at least this is a testament to its inherently low distortion. Too, I found the tight bass quality quite impressive. Since my own feelings run to somewhat less brightness than the CA-100 has, I would have liked to have a treble level control—something the Audax lacks. Over-all, I would say that the CA-100 is a top-notch speaker system and a leading contender in its price class.

CA-60

This attractive cabinet houses a scaled-down version, so to speak, of the larger system. Although the Audax advertising brochure states that the CA-60 has one six-inch woofer and one tweeter, I peeked inside and saw in my sample *two* six-inch woofers and one tweeter. (Audax informs me that all CA-60s are now supplied this

way). Be that as it may, the CA-60 sounds surprisingly good, especially considering its diminutive size. This is one of the few bookshelf speakers that will fit on a standard bookshelf.

The over-all quality of this speaker is much like that of its big brother, the CA-100. The prime difference is in extreme bass, something that simply is lacking in this speaker. On the top, too, I found the smaller system to be somewhat harsher, though still acceptable. What there is in frequency response is well balanced; certainly this system does not sound thin. As I mentioned, the over-all quality of sound is very close in flavor to the CA-100. Response tapers off, again without doubling, below about sixty cycles. The top end rises a bit faster than the big

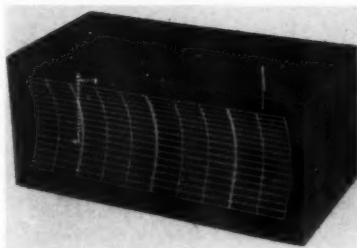
AUDAX SPEAKER SYSTEMS

CA-100	CA-60
Response: 30 to 20 kc	70 to 17 kc
Power watts: 40 watts	20 watts
Size: 12 x 15 x 25	9½ x 10 x 18
Weight: 39 lbs.	15 lbs
Price: \$139.95	\$59.95

(shown below)

(shown on next page)





system, which may, in part, account for the greater harshness. I found the system sounded much better with treble reduced somewhat at the preamp. Again, I feel that a tweeter level control would be desirable.

The CA-60 is, after all, a budget item. For sixty dollars it is not fair to expect the last word in sound. The system does give value, however. Since it is a high-efficiency system, relatively inexpensive low-powered amplifiers can be used for power. The family with a limited budget can, with this speaker as a core, construct a

mono or stereo system for far less than the price of run-of-the-mill pre-packaged units sold in the department stores, and still achieve better quality.

A word now about the styling of both systems. Style, like sound, is a personal affair, and as such has different meanings for different people. Audax is to be commended for making an effort, however misguided, to inject visual quality into a piece of furniture-equipment intended for living rooms. I find the textured grille of the CA-100 potentially very attractive; I say "potentially" because I find the color of the present grille quite distressing. Then, too, though I personally like walnut, many people do not. It would seem to me that Audax is needlessly limiting its market for what is sonically a fine product by being extreme in the styling department. None the less, Audax does deserve an "E" for effort. It would be well for other manufacturers to note that style is becoming more and more important as high fidelity becomes less and less a concern of the hobbyist exclusively.

Audio Devices Echoraser

TAPE RECORDISTS who have been troubled with the problem of print-through of storage tapes will be cheered by this new product from Audio Devices. Print-through is caused by magnetic impulses on adjacent layers of tape slightly magnetizing each other. Thus an instantaneous musical impulse will be heard weakly before and after the actual sound on the tape. Even when masked by other sounds, print-through tends to muddy the quality of reproduction.

Now Audio Devices, manufacturers of Audiotapes and Audiodiscs, have come up with a product which does significantly reduce print-through without affecting the prime signal.

It should be pointed out that reels with very bad print-through which have been in storage for some time will be only slightly helped by the application of the Echoraser, but tapes with only a moderate amount of print-through, which can be annoying enough, can have the print-through re-

duced to below audibility. After extensive use, I can report that the device functions exactly as advertised.

The Echoraser comes with a mounting bracket, screws, and two sensitized elements, a red and black one. The red one is used for reducing weak print-through while the black will reduce strong print-through, though it might also affect high frequencies in newly-recorded tapes. Recordings more than ten weeks old will not be affected by the stronger black element. In terms of db reduction the black element will reduce print-through by about 9 db at 10 weeks of age, and will still reduce as much as 6 db of print-through from a tape two years old.

This product is, of course, of specialized interest. For the average home recordist, print-through is simply no problem. Many home machines have noise levels which tend to mask the effects of print-through. The audiophile with a professional-grade machine will find the Echoraser a definite aid.

Folk Music

By HENRIETTA YURCHENCO

Gods and Demons of Bolivia: *Folk Songs of Magic, Love and Fiesta*; sung by "The Morning Stars", Tito Yupanqui and Khosinaira, accompanied by Charangos, Zamponas, and Indian Pipes and Drums. Vanguard VRS-9054, \$4.98.

▲THE most striking music of pre-Hispanic Latin America came from the Andean region of South America once occupied by Incan civilization. Its attractions were so great, the melodies and instruments so deep-rooted in the musical culture of that vast region that, even today, more than 400 years after the conquest, popular music still retains the ancient melodic patterns. This does not mean that the Andean people turned their backs on Spanish music, but rather that they were not so quick to discard their own music in favor of the conquerors'. From the Spaniards they accepted string instruments, and under the Hispanic influence they modified their primitive flutes, sang their melodies in two voices, and accompanied their songs harmonically. Today's Andean music also includes dances and songs that amalgamated European and native traits, as well as sentimental songs found everywhere in Latin-American countries.

This release on Vanguard is performed by a folk music group. All categories of folk music, ranging from primitive to European-type music, are presented, sometimes sung in Spanish or in a mixture of *Quechua* or *Aymara*. A number of delightful *cuecas*, *bailecitos*, *huayños*, dances of the Andes, are done in fine arrangements. *Verses de contrapunto*, a Spanish tradition where a few singers improvise verses on any number of subjects, is represented. Too bad the words are not given, for wit and poetic ingenuity characterize these verses.

Khosinaira is a pleasant enough singer of no great vocal distinction. Tito Yupanqui, of pure Aymara blood, has an affected quality. It mars the performance. His own medleys and re-creations of primitive ceremonial music are presented with a contrived air. The over-dramatization and emotionalism are not compatible with the subject. Still, this recording is one of the few from Latin America which

attempts, if not always successfully, to present Bolivian folk music honestly, without the cloying presence of commercial and city-made adaptations.

Well worth owning. Notes are provided. —H.Y.

Songs of the Southern Mountains:

Wayfaring stranger (Marie Brown, soprano); *The Cuckoo*; *Wondrous Love*; *The Gipsum Davy*; *Black is the color* (Rhudy Snelling, basso); *One morning in May* (Trudy Pipkin, soprano); Raymond Andrews, tenor); *Kedron*; *The Riddle Song*; *The seeds of love*; *Sourwood Mountain*; *Pretty Saro*; *The Crowdad Song* (Marion DeBary, contralto); *Nine hundred miles*; *On top of Old Smoky*; The Goldenaires Choir; John Pizzarelli (guitar), conducted by Orita Graigne. Stereovox Vox STV-425.810, \$4.98.

⑤NO information is given about the singers who present this program of sacred and secular folksongs, though a leaflet with song texts, is provided and there is a short introductory note on the jacket. But somehow this seems not inappropriate, since the emphasis is all on the music. Obviously this is not a very professional group; there is no hint of slickness in their music making. They sing from the heart and let their vocalism be what it will. But they do harmonize, and there is give and take among them. One may imagine such a group singing in a southern home or parish house largely for the edification and entertainment of its own members. In other words, here is some genuine folk music. —P.L.M.

●
Gypsy Festival. Field Recording by Deben Bhattacharya, made at Les Saintes Maries de la Mer, France. Westminster WF-12030, \$4.98.

▲EVERY year in May the Catholic gypsies of Europe, particularly France and Spain, make a pilgrimage to Les Saintes de la Mer to celebrate the feast day of their patron saint, Sara. Mr. Bhattacharya, whose discs from Israel and India have been noted in these columns, recorded the proceedings of this unusual event on the spot. Although the result contains neither great music nor great performances, it is an interesting social and musical document. The festival is captured in sound elements sacred and profane. In the gypsy encampment flamenco singing and guitar playing, handclapping, and the cries of the spectators dominate all. The deep religious

Henrietta Yurchenco is the chief folk music critic. Paul Kresh and Herbert Haufrecht are her associate reviewers.

feeling of the festival is conveyed in the hymn singing taped in the church itself at the crucial moment of religious rapture, in the sound of church bells, in the chanting of the priest during the procession when the statues of the saints are borne to the sea. To complete the document, Mr. Bhattacharya took his microphone to the town cafe, where a good guitarist is heard playing jazz, and to the arena, where professional flamenco performers entertained. As an added bonus there is a selection of classical guitar music.

A perceptive collector, the producer has edited his material with musical insight. There are examples of every level of musical performance—professional, amateur, cafe style. The contents include folk music, popular music, art music. Dispelled is the illusion harbored by so many that the Spanish gypsies like flamenco all the time. (This reviewer has seen the Granada gypsies dance to hit songs.)

Out of his special kinship with the gypsies, whose origins are believed to be in India, Mr. Bhattacharya has written an informative booklet, too, illustrated by excellent photographs.

The recording was done under the auspices of the International Music Council of UNESCO. A worthy project. —H.Y.

•
Harry Belafonte: *My Lord What A Mornin'.* Victor LPM-2022, \$3.98.

▲IN Belafonte we have that type of artist who molds the raw material of his heritage into a more polished form. His interpretations, though well thought out and artistic in detail, still retain that quality of spontaneity and, when he does not succumb to the blandishments of the stage, he is exciting. The choral background, arranged and conducted by Robert Corman, generally is well suited and furnishes body, strength, and variety to Belafonte's voice which is limited in these respects. The arrangements for chorus *a cappella* are effective and tasteful. With the exception of *Let Me Fly*, which shifts key as a modulation (a cliché in the pop music field), they are within the style of the spirituals even though somewhat elaborate. Outstanding selections for this reviewer were *Wake Up, Jacob* with its naturally exciting rhythm of the words, *Ezekiel Saw de Wheel* for its fine symphonic vocal setting, *Oh Freedom* for its feeling of extemporé singing, and *Swing Low, March Down to Jordan* was the high point of the record for me. Mr. Belafonte has the good dramatic sense to juxtapose *Steal Away* and the last-mentioned song. He sings it solo, bringing into play his best qualities: intensity, clear diction, and an intimate personal expression which gives life to the music. —H.H.

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The Third Ear

By C. VICTOR CAMPOS

HIGH-FIDELITY advertising has become a mumbo-jumbo of technical terms which are meaningless to the layman. It is almost impossible to compare equipment or performance from advertised specifications. In order to compare, all units should be run through identical tests or at least some tests under identical conditions. If nothing else, the conditions under which the published figures were arrived at should be disclosed. A statement of frequency response means nothing if the power output at which it was taken is not given. Also, a frequency response measurement taken at $\frac{1}{2}$ watt from an amplifier that supposedly can deliver 40 or 50 watts could be very misleading. At $\frac{1}{2}$ watt the amplifier may deliver that power from 10 to 50,000 cps, but at 40 or 50 watts (if it is a poor amplifier) it may put out "flat" 50 to 12,000 cps. A good 50-watt amplifier will deliver 50 watts of power from 20 to 20,000 cps. Also, at $\frac{1}{2}$ watt it will deliver 10 to 50,000 or 75,000 cps. At the low power rating these amplifiers will seem almost identical, but when we leave the "short-pants" stage and get into sizable power one of them will be greatly superior. However, if no identification as to power is given with frequency response measurements it can be seen how an inferior amplifier may look superior to

one that has been more honestly advertised.

Maximum power output is another commonly found measurement in advertising. Unless the exact conditions under which this measurement was made are also divulged, gross misconceptions will be engendered in a comparison of specs. First, there are several ways of measuring maximum power output. One way is to measure the output on a wattmeter, or equivalent device, at 1,000 cps or thereabouts. There will come a point where the amplifier will saturate; that is, where there will be no increase in output regardless of how much more the input to the amplifier is increased or the volume advanced. This is called "clipping level", or "maximum output", or what have you. However, the "clipping level" at 1,000 cps will be higher in watts than at 30 or 20 cps in almost all amplifiers. This discrepancy varies with the units. On some it may be small, and in others quite large. It may be that one amplifier clips at 26 watts at 1,000 cps and at 7 watts at 30 cps. Which is maximum power output? Another amplifier will clip at 48 watts at 1,000 cps and at 40 watts at 30 cps (and this, by the way, is an excellent amplifier).

We have not yet mentioned the factor of distortion. The above method of determining "clipping level" disregards dis-

It has been called to our attention that The American Audio Institute, referred to on page 646 in the April issue as "independent", is operated by a man who does business at the same address as a high-fidelity dealer franchised to sell certain of the lines covered in the A. A. I. test reports. Without respect to the accuracy of the A. A. I. findings, we regret that our review attributed total impartiality to them.



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tortion, but if harmonic distortion is measured it may be shown to be quite high, especially in the low-frequency region. Another method, which seems to be the British way, is to measure the power output at a given distortion figure (let's say .5%). As soon as the amplifier produces this distortion figure, that is the power output that is advertised. This is a very conservative method of measurement. For instance, the Quad amplifier is rated at 12 watts, yet the unit will develop almost 20 watts before the distortion figure increases appreciably (on instruments, not audibly). However, many other amplifiers advertise larger power outputs when really they have (1) lower power outputs, (2) greater distortion, and (3) ultimately much poorer sound quality. But there is absolutely no way for a reader to compare because some manufacturers have not given a complete set of conditions under which the tests were made.

A curve on graph paper can be changed in such a way as to make the unit seem smoother than it really is. This is especially true with loudspeakers. The smoother parts of the curve can be stretched out, the peaks shrunk, and the vertical axis of the graph reduced while lengthening the horizontal axis, so that at a glance the impression is one of extremely level response. A noted speaker authority states in one of his books: "Whilst on the subject of curves, it should be pointed out that appearances are sometimes deceptive; a nicely undulated, almost level curve can be produced by widening sections of the frequency scale and/or closing up db intervals. This is a popular pastime with some purveyors of publicity. . ." (G. A. Briggs, *Loudspeakers*, p. 327).

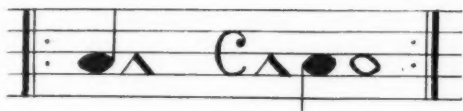
Confusion marches on with a few manufacturers advertising the "peak power" of their amplifiers while others prefer to use the continuous power or r.m.s. rating. To those who know the difference, comparison becomes automatic, but the one who is unfamiliar with power terminology will probably misconstrue the data. The difference is fairly simple. Peak power is the maximum power in watts that an amplifier will deliver to a loudspeaker for very short periods of time (such as a single blow

on the kettledrum). This is usually twice the amount of continuous power or r.m.s. power that the amplifier can deliver. Conversely, to find the peak power that the amplifier can deliver, the r.m.s. may be multiplied by two. Continuous power or r.m.s. power is the maximum power in watts that an amplifier is capable of delivering to a speaker uninterruptedly within a specific frequency limit without its output decreasing or distortion increasing. Usually this is measured by means of sine waves, which are repetitive and identical in character.

Certain amplifiers are advertised as (1) being 20 watts per channel while others are advertised as (2) 20-watt stereo amplifiers, while others yet are advertised as (3) 20 watts peak stereo amplifiers. Still another form you'll find is (4) 20 watts per channel, 40 watts monaural (or monophonic). Let's examine these. In case number one the amplifier may or may not be 20 watts per channel. But assuming it does deliver 20 watts per channel, we will have 40 watts r.m.s. in stereophony. In case number two we'll find it might be 10 watts per channel r.m.s. or 20 in stereophony. Care must be exercised in reading the accompanying copy. In case number three we'll find a 5-watt r.m.s. per channel amplifier or 10 watts r.m.s. in stereo.

Case number four is quite popular. This statement may mean that if we use it stereophonically we'll have 40 watts r.m.s. Also, if we use it monophonically with a mono record through two loudspeakers we'll have the *equivalent* of 40 watts r.m.s. It might also mean that this amplifier can be "strapped" or "paralleled" to feed one loudspeaker 40 watts r.m.s. In other words this stereo amplifier can be made into the equivalent of one monophonic amplifier. An example of this case is the Dynakit Stereo 70.

As we rummage through ads, then, we may sometimes see the need for interpretative powers beyond our command. And even if the necessary knowledge is there we may be misled. So read carefully, for it behooves us to remember that the advertising agency's responsibility is to its client (the manufacturer), not to the reader.



THE CLASSICAL collector is one of the most serious problems an American record company has to face. His kind of demands for wider repertory and greater choice of interpretations would add up to a major headache in public relations for any industry, and the situation is further complicated in this field by the fact that even the best-selling classical records seldom make money.

To amortize the costs of recording, a series of international affiliates has been set up by most of the major producers to issue their performances in other markets as well. This works both ways: quite a large portion of the American catalogue is made up of recordings originating elsewhere. The numerous black diamonds which have dotted Schwann's pages over the years can attest, however, that the accepted method of completely remastering and repackaging a record has been far from a financial success.

Essentially a disc of extra-American origin involves, when being prepared for domestic release, a great duplication of labor. And the manufacturer here may have to place an initial order in quantities greater than the total eventual sale to realize the barest economies of mass production. All that is expected of the bulk of these discs is that they pay their own way, but as production costs continue to climb, even the sale of a such a modest quantity becomes increasingly remote.

Domestic manufacturing processes are, of necessity, pointed towards the mass market—the greater quantity of an item produced at one time, the lower the cost per unit. This may explain why a company prefers selling one popular record 250,000 times to selling ten which average about 25,000 each (an exceptionally high figure, by the way, for a classical release). The greatest savings through mass production are achieved through reduction of physical handling; labor costs are the

great variable. In Europe, where this expense is considerably lower, it is possible to manufacture in smaller quantities.

But perhaps a solution to the delicate problems of pacifying the record collector, and at the same time cutting the financial losses and other headaches associated with the necessity of maintaining a "prestige" catalogue, is available after all. Suppose each record were to be manufactured only in one place? In recent years the industry seems to have been groping toward this.

English Decca continues to make its line of records for the U. S. A. in England, only substituting "London" for "Decca" labels in the presses. On the surface this would seem to be a most sensible procedure, but somehow it just hasn't worked out. I recall, for instance, that for a good six months recently it was impossible to locate a copy of the Ferrier-Walter *Das Lied von der Erde* in New York. And for nine months of the year, being able to order the London "*Parsifal*" and get it within a few weeks is out of the question. Waiting periods would be considerably more bearable if there were any assurance that the order eventually would be filled. The confusion on the part of the dealer as to what is and what isn't in print on London at any given time over the past three or four years adequately demonstrates the failure of this trans-oceanic inventory control.

My own feeling is that London has been too successful to follow its own policy consistently. The catalogue is too large and the quantities involved for certain discs too great. There is a natural tendency to concentrate production on best-sellers. So I do not doubt that London's system has worked out very well for London, if not for the catalogue-searching collector.

Experience with direct imports in the past has shown either supreme optimism or gross ignorance on the importer's part.

Remember the large amounts of L'Oiseau-Lyre which were brought in and eventually dumped.

The failure of such attempts is due not so much to poor merchandising on this side of the ocean as it is to an unrealistic view of the American record buyer. Nationally speaking, the records which sell in quantity are on major labels with artists whose names have been carefully built up, through advertising techniques closely related to that used by Hollywood, to signify super-artistry amounting to interpretative infallibility. Against this careful build-up, what chance has a label with an unfamiliar name and unfamiliar artists and material in the classical mass market? Although I am personally appalled at this state of affairs, I cannot but acknowledge its existence.

It may well be that importation is practical only with discs expected to sell no more than perhaps two thousand copies, with the average for the catalogue somewhere between five hundred and a thousand. Before I hear objections to these figures on grounds of their smallness, may I merely mention that according to a reliable source "*The Fairy Queen*" has failed to reach the thousand mark one year after reaching the stores in spite of the rave reviews which accompanied its release. If this item were to be cut out tomorrow I doubt whether another fifty sales would be lost. On things of this nature, probably eighty to ninety per cent are sold within the first year.

Getting imports into the stores is generally accomplished either through an American record company with an already established distribution system or through an "independent" who services a number of the smaller lines in an area. Recently a number of the larger record shops have undertaken distribution of one or two European labels. The major step required to establish a line is to have it listed in the Schwann Catalog. This honor has recently fallen to Odéon, Pathé, Cetra, Cantate, Electrola, and Deutsche Grammophon.

A number of the smaller importers cultivate a market so specialized that

listings of their labels need never appear in the Schwann Catalog to be successful. For example, Audio Showcase (1329 Second Avenue, New York City) is bringing in an interesting Philips 45 on which is a setting of the Mass to various African tribal rhythms sung by a native group. Discophile (26 West 8th Street, New York City) supplies the Christophoros line, including a three-record documentary history of Germany from 1933 through the end of the war with the recorded voices of a number of personalities actually recorded at crucial moments over this period. Many imported book shops carry European spoken word records.

One major problem to the importer is that the label copy and liner notes are in the language of the country of pressing, although sometimes (DGG) translations are included. Perhaps a separate sheet of paper with a translation, if nothing else, could be included.

But the buyer's main concern is the extra charge made for each record, generally an additional dollar. I should think, however, that this additional expense permits the importer to bring in many unusual items which could not be sold here for less. I also believe that the people who are going to buy such discs will feel these are important enough to warrant spending the extra money.

Understandably, most of us want a record delivered at time of purchase. I am afraid that this has worked to the disadvantage of the smaller shops without immense stocks, particularly those outside the largest cities. In order for the small distributor to succeed it is vital that the customer place an order for the records of his choice and contain himself for the necessary few weeks until they arrive. Otherwise such a system will either fail or be limited to metropolitan centers.

Without the co-operation of the customer this manna from Europe will cease. But as things stand at present the success achieved by those few lines being brought in from abroad has pointed the way to solving a problem which has long plagued the record industry. We—you and I—are that problem.

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(Continued from page 709)

carried away by a latter-day Irish Nausicaa, the original being the girl who unwittingly helped rescue Odysseus after he saw her and her friends dancing on the wash by the seaside to work the dirt out. The dirt is worked out in rather another way in the Joyce version, but a magnificent passage it is. In all, this recording, with a fine Miro reproduction on the cover, is a revelation, done with amazing understanding and intelligence, of a prose that is truly enhanced and brought into focus by being read aloud. Moreover, the record should speed novices to the pages of the novel itself for additional delights and thrills.

•
JOYCE: "Finnegan's Wake". Siobhan McKenna and Cyril Cusack Reading "Anna Livia Plurabelle" and "Shem The Penman". Directed by Howard Sackler. Caedmon TC-1086. \$5.95.

▲CAEDMON has certainly done justice to Joyce. Cyril Cusack's high voice might put you off for a moment, but as his nimble tongue begins to race over the "Shem the Penman" passage from this giant puzzle of a novel, with never a fluff or a wavering in speech or inflection, you are sure to be properly floored by the masterly virtuosity of it. It is interesting to compare Miss McKenna's interpretation of the Anna Livia Plurabelle passage on the other side, into which she brings the very sounds of the River Liffey itself through her voice as the author intended, with the author's own readings on LPs reissued some years ago by the Joyce Society on Folkways. While the author's fluent tenor undoubtedly brought the melody of the short passage he read to enchanting life, the actress finds other values, and exploits them with all the talent at her imposing command. It is curious how the text of *Finnegan*, when looked at cold on the page, seems reluctant to move and come alive, like the separate images of a motion picture strip viewed individually. Let the right voice take over, though, and like a projected series of movie frames Joyce's phrases begin to assemble themselves magically, notes that spring to life when interpreted by the skilled player, no matter how intricate the score. The record is an extremely rewarding ex-

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perience, and one that can easily change any living room into a raging arena of controversy—a sort of violent-conversation piece—given the right guest list. A great blessing is the provision of two texts (“Share The Wake”, it says on the album cover) indispensable to the proper enjoyment of such a record, and all too often missing from other spoken-word albums.

•
“The Midnight Court”, by Brian Merriman. Translated from the Gaelic by Frank O'Connor. Read by Siobhan McKenna. Produced and Directed by Arthur Luce Klein. Spoken Arts 742. \$5.95.

▲THE gifted Miss McKenna, whose presence seems to be everywhere these days, does her best in a lilting brogue with this translation of an exactly long ballad by Brian Merriman, but the relentless metrics of the affair are liable to lose all but the most steadfast devotees before it's all over. Mr. O'Connor has written some remarkable and striking English lines out of the Gaelic in this narrative in verse about an Irish girl (symbolizing Ireland, of course) who is in a fierce rage against the marriage-dodging bachelors among her countrymen. And he employs some vivid language toward the end, you may be sure, to tell what ought to be done with such—passages Miss McKenna delivers with an asperity to give a man pause. The sound is faithful and soothing. A text might have helped, but none is provided.

•
The Poems of William Butler Yeats.

Read by William Butler Yeats, Siobhan McKenna and Michael MacLiammoir. Produced and directed by Arthur Luce Klein. Spoken Arts 753. \$5.95.

▲THE most fascinating section of this recording—a real treasure-trove for Yeats lovers—is the section in which Yeats himself discusses such (to him) Johnny-come-latelies as Eliot and Edith Sitwell, whom he contemplates with bafflement but a sincere intent of sympathetic understanding, and reads several of his own verses as well. In fact, he reads *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* twice, the second time most melodramatically. The Age of Intimate

Reading had not yet been ushered in when he declaimed these words in Ireland. And while you have to strain a bit to make out the words in these pre-hi-fi dubbings, you will be gratified by the lilt and charm of the voice of this poet who promised that he would “not read as if in prose”. At times, Yeats sounds almost like the Voice of Ireland itself, singing of itself in English translation still drenched with Gaelic sunlight. Mr. MacLiammoir, who reads more than a dozen of the giant's verses on side two under more modern recording conditions, is no subscriber to the Intimate Recitation school either. He is a man after the poet's own heart, intoning in a quavering full tenor so hypnotic that one is liable often to forget entirely the sense of what is being intoned. Miss McKenna contributes four brief selections in a slightly less sensational manner.

•
The Thrill of Sports; narrated by Don Dunphy, Harry Wismer, Russ Hodges and Chris Schenkel. Columbia ML 5294. \$4.98.

▲THERE are rewards in being a music critic—an unexpectedly wonderful recording, the discovery of a fine new piece, and once in a great while an opportunity such as this. I love sports. And, bravely stated, have participated in many of them. I am not protesting too much; merely anticipating the argument that a chap who may know his Varèse, Schönberg, and Bartók cannot be prepared to know his Tilden Ruth, and Carnera. I do. This record has some exciting “on the spot” interviews, especially the noise, hysteria, and tears of joy in the locker room after Bobby Thomson destroyed the Dodgers with his bat, and the thrilling matter of Joe Louis smashing the Nazi legend of the super-race with his fists. Thirty-one events are covered, and there are many duplicates of the radio broadcasts covering the Davis Cup, Olympics, and similar star-studded events. Anyone interested in sports history, and anyone who has either seen or merely heard of these athletic greats, will have satisfaction from this record. There are more things on earth, indeed, than music-making. —A.C.

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May,

Five French literary giants

By STEPHEN POTTER

"Les Soirees Litteraires"; Presented by Béatrix Dussane; Read by Mme. Dussane and members of the Comédie Française: *Les Batailles de Molière*, *Les Voyages de La Fontaine*, *Les Victoires de Voltaire*, *Les Rêves du Jeune Hugo*, *Les Nostalgies d'Alfred de Musset* (in French). Pathé set DTX-281/5, ten sides, \$29.75 (Import).

No kin to the author of *Gamesmanship et al.*, our Stephen Potter is nevertheless a short story writer of distinction and, in addition, a longtime resident in France, so that he is amply qualified for this kind of Frenchmanship.

May, 1960

WHAT THE French government's spectacle of "*Son et Lumière*" has done to glamorize France's chateaus and monuments, the Comédie Française here attempts—on a less flamboyant and more modest scale, to be sure—to resurrect (through dialogue, recitation, incidental music and the gifted programming of Béatrix Dussane) the glories and the turbulences of five of that country's literary giants. Madame Dussane's knowledgeable spotlights shift with deft rapidity, and her colorings and juxtapositions of focus are achieved with a skill worthy of those canny electricians who manipulate the tourist attraction. She achieves her effects in a series of penetrating revelations of significant events in the lives of her chosen heros—annotated selections from their prose or verse, extracts from their theatre, interspersed with a generous parade of homages, attacks and commentaries from their contemporaries. The result is no potpourri but cohesive evocations of genuine people who move within the framework of their epochs. Thirty members of the Comédie alternate in bringing alive this elaborate program and their consummate skill in the task is almost beyond criticism.

Molière's battles were many; his outspokenness, his pitiless satires, his attacks on the *faux-semblants* of his time, invited collision. The highlight of his brilliantly recorded profile is a series of tirades by the theologian Louis Bourdaloue on the subjects of Slander, Banality, and Hypocrisy that are interspersed with carefully chosen rebuttals from the mouths of Molière's characters. It is a devilishly effective dialogue. Other selections from Molière, Boileau (an ally), Scarron (who may have influenced Molière), Bossuet (in a fire-eating mood) and the garrulous Madame de Sévigné contribute to the kaleidoscope of "The Battles of Molière". A touching note is the recital of Molière's dying day when, despite pain and his rapidly waning strength, he insisted on performing the "*Malade Imaginaire*" so that the workers associated with the play might earn their bread.

"The Voyages of La Fontaine" is the most entertaining of the records in this

album and small wonder, for it consists almost entirely of recitals of his charming fables. All of the renderings are perfect while the acrid tremolo of Robert Hirsch's reading of "The Cat, The Weasel and the Rabbit" and George Chamarat's enthusiasm with "The Cock, the Cat and the Mouse" are outstanding.

La Fontaine, who was no stodgy moralist but a libertine, is revealed through his fables. "The Plague-Ridden Animals" is a perfect miniature of the injustice of his times (and ours), "The Dog and the Wolf" a reflection of his fervent need for freedom. La Fontaine's "voyages" were a passive escape from obligation; his sympathies were with the carefree grasshopper and never with the dreary drudge of an ant.

Estimates of Voltaire's correspondence run as high as 10,000 letters and if they were not all literary documents most were weapons in his battle for human enlightenment. Madame Dussane provides us with a sampling of his epistles in "The Victories of Voltaire". Typical is one that reveals his miseries in the Prussian court. "My friend" in this mordant "Vocabulary of Kings" becomes "my slave"; "Sup with me this evening" translates "I'll make mock of you tonight". Voltaire's contemporaries, Saint-Simon and Diderot, are heard in brief extracts that lend dimension to the challenging epoch, and there is a well-contrived debate between Voltaire and Rousseau, whose celebrity Voltaire resented bitterly. "Your philosophy", Voltaire accuses, "would return us to the state of beasts." And Rousseau, who surely dwelled in the shadows of madness, counters Voltaire's distress at the Lisbon earthquake with the suggestion that there would have been little loss of life had no city existed. For huts and hamlets were the ultimate communities in Rousseau's strange concept.

The world of Victor Hugo's youth—the years of the "germination of his genius"—provide the frame of "The Dreams of Young Hugo". We hear the "voices" of Mirabeau in impassioned eloquence, Danton in his fanatical "Call to Arms", Chateaubriand in a somber recital from his "René" ("I want to be Chateaubriand—or nothing", the exuberant young Hugo

had vowed), Lamartine and other contemporary romantics reciting from their hypersensitive verse. Finally there is Hugo reading from his moving "The Greek Child" his pompous "Ode to a Column" and his over-esteemed "Hymn", the last two delivered with an excess of trembling-voiced passion which in part can be attributed to the dazzling effect his poetry still has on the French public.

The centenary of the death of Alfred de Musset has dictated the choice of the moon-cultist's works for the final disc. The selections are heavily loaded, as must be any fair sampling of de Musset, with the sonorities of suffering love, chaste flowers, *frémissements*, pale arms and abysmal sighs, and the talents of the Comédie's readers are little able to mask the overblown emotions of much of this verse. Several of the selections, notably "A Lost Evening" and "A Supper at Rachel's", do provide a refreshing change of pace from the painful passions, for de Musset did not lack in wit and delicacy when, in those rarer moments, he could detach himself from his own "*affaires de coeur*".

The album is an opulent one, covered with an imitation velour that evokes the red plush of the theater. The array of skilled voices contained within its covers represent a rare gamut of spoken French. And the selections heard, save for a peppering of bombast, should delight the cultured ear and stimulate the mind. They are variegated and paced with taste and an unerring feeling for theater. Madame Dussane is a gracious *speakeuse* and her commentaries are brief, lucid and penetrating. An interweaving of incidental music throughout highlights the drama or the wit and reinforces the capacities of the devoted listener.

The album will prove an expensive but worth-while tool for the serious student of French literature and a happy choice for members of the cultivated cult that dotes on the exquisite lyricism of spoken French at its finest and the grace of French wit and spirit. It will prove a disappointment and a bore to those who seek purer entertainment and to the casual and unadvised collector of French records *per se*.

Unlikely Corners

WHY NOT LOOK below the surface occasionally and find out what it is in the direct appeal of the popular tune which makes the audience go home whistling; to see if there is not some artistic impulse hidden in unlikely corners. . .

—Ralph Vaughan Williams

THIS IS being written on the morning after the presentation of the Academy Awards, which didn't turn out too badly this year. But the musical portions of the show made for curious contrast: it opened with an overture comprised of Harold Arlen songs, and somewhere about midway Ella Fitzgerald sang a few Gershwin songs. Along with these came this year's songs and the final winner. What a difference in quality and invention! They really don't write songs the way they used to.

To prove it, along comes an enjoyable album from Everest, **Irving Berlin** (LPBR-6058), subtitled "Great Man of American Music". Raoul Poliakin conducts a large orchestra and chorus in most tasteful presentations of a dozen Berlin songs, including *Let's Face the Music and Dance*, *Now It Can Be Told*, *I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm*, *With You*, and the usual lovely Berlin ballads.

Rodgers and Hammerstein get good service in the bargain-priced (\$3.98 for two records) **Rodgers and Hammerstein Songbook** (Camden CBL-102). Richard Kiley sings in a fine, straight, baritone more than two dozen songs.

With the release of the film "**Can Can**", Cole Porter's score for that show (with some "hits" from previous Porter scores added, just to be Hollywood-sure) is coming into notice again. A most interesting instrumental going-over is given it by Nelson Riddle (Capitol T-1365), worth looking into if you are interested in diverting, almost intellectual, popular song arrangements.

Another less exciting, though attractive, instrumental set presented in good taste is **The Music of Sigmund Romberg** (RCA Victor LPM-2106), played by the George Melachrino orchestra. No novelties here; Romberg's music was rarely, if ever, predicated on anything but straightforward melodiousness.

Frank Loesser's **Greenwillow** (RCA Victor LOC-2001) has arrived, beautifully

packaged, and on the whole excellently sung, and above all enchantingly orchestrated by Don Walker. Which means, I've not yet really made up my mind about it. I do enjoy such songs as *Summertime Love* and *Faraway Boy*, but there does seem to be a leanness of real musical ideas and a striving for a quaint folksy quality that manages to remain elusive throughout. Sometimes it almost becomes embarrassing (*Clang Dang The Bell*), or falls flat (perhaps because the liner note doesn't give any idea of what it's about: *He Died Good*).

Whatever the reservations, this seems to me a worth-while project, and certainly it is a record worth having if you are seriously concerned with the development of our musical theater. But now that Frank Loesser has an Italian opera and a quasi-English ballad opera out of his system, maybe he will return to the form of his American opera, "Guys And Dolls". Not that he should attempt to do the same sort of thing again. It is in fact commendable that he does reach as high as he does; and that his tries are so good, but never so good as when he didn't reach so high and managed to exceed himself.

A new record by Felicia Sanders is always news; more so when, in one man's opinion at least, it turns out to be the best yet. In **I Wish You Love** (Time Records T-70002) she is given very excellent—that is, tasteful and discreet—backing by Irving Joseph. This is best illustrated in the simple presentation of the E. Y. Harburg-Earl Robinson song *Said I to My Heart, Said I* (from a 1946 Barbara Stanwyck-Ray Milland film, "California"), which is done with a guitar accompaniment. Thus is the original simple folk quality of the song preserved; and a good song it is, too, and beautifully sung, as may be expected.

Among the other fine songs presented in Miss Sanders' recital are Bernstein's *A Lonely Town*, Weill's *We'll Go Away Together*, Rome's *Anyone Would Love You*,

and Irving Caesar's *If I Forget You*. Very good singing, indeed.

RCA got the inspired notion to add to the current rash of Maurice Chevalier recordings by reissuing a dozen of the original sides dating back to the twenties in **Thank Heaven for Maurice Chevalier!** (LPM-2076). Here are such songs as *My Love Parade*, *Louise*, *My Ideal*, *I Was Lucky*, *Mimi*, *Rhythm of the Rain*, in their original irrepressible renditions. The sound is good enough.

Tony Bennett has done a good album, **To My Wonderful One** (Columbia CL-1429), in which this vocalist who, though usually in the class that *Variety* refers to as a "belter", proves he can also sing with sensitivity. I cannot always approve of his tendency to stray from the melody or lyric, but he does do well by a ballad when he so wishes. With the orchestra of Frank DeVol backing him, Bennett sings an especially good *Speak Low*, and does well also by such good songs as *April in Paris*, *September Song*, *Laura*, and *Last Night When We Were Young*.

A new voice, to records at least, is that of Dick Williams, who may be heard in **Love Is Nothin' But the Blues** (Capitol T-1330). His is a rich, full, pleasant voice, good for both lyrical and rhythmic songs. He does particularly well with *It Could Happen to You*, *Love Letters*, and *What Is This Thing Called Love?*

Another new voice belongs to the young Joanie Sommers, whose album is titled **Positively the Most!** (Warner Bros. © 1346). Though her voice is obviously lovely, Miss Sommers tends toward the cool approach in her singing. This sometimes makes for an almost expressionless style of delivery, a mere chanting of the lyrics in a tuneless manner. But not enough to disguise the fact that Miss Sommers actually can sing, once she abandons her mannerisms. And the tunes? She certainly knows how to pick 'em, to wit: *I Like the Likes of You*, *What's New?*, *So In Love*, *Oh But I Do*, *Ol' Devil Moon*, *It Might as Well Be Spring*, plus some lesser-known but good new songs.

Another splendid new girl singer is Janice Harper. She may be heard singing in a full lovely voice in **Embers of Love** (Capitol T-1337); among the songs may be heard the American art song *All the Things You Are*. Included also are *If You Are But a Dream*, *The Thrill Is Gone*, *I Hadn't Anyone Till You*, and *I'm Through With Love*. More albums to come, I hope!

Some recent nostalgia in the way of painless TV-inspired history may be heard on **Not So Long Ago** (RCA Victor LOC-1055). Here are the voices of LaGuardia (reading the funnies), Truman (imitating H. V. Kaltenborn), Eisenhower, Churchill in a recollection of recent history. Bob

Hope serves as narrator, and Robert Russell Bennett conducts a score he arranged from the popular songs of the period.

Somewhat along the same lines is **Remember When . . .** (Epic LN-3664), a collection of songs going back to the Civil War. They are all tastefully sung by the Merrill Staton Choir with assorted soloists. This album is an important contribution to musical Americana and should be in the collection of anyone interested in our musical history. Included is a song with a lyric by Mark Twain, *Punch in the Presence of the Passenjare*.

Another album, while not so carefully done, is also interesting: **Dottie Sloop Plays Songs from the Great Musical Shows** (Golden Crest 3071). Dottie Sloop is a pianist with a neat touch and a feeling for the old tunes. Included in this collection are songs from the early musicals by Victor Herbert, Friml, Kalman, Lehár, Jerome Kern and Gustave Luders. In all there are thirty-five songs presented in medley form. A nice collection of rarities. But don't forget, these are piano solos—no singing, no big mood bands, just the songs in all their simplicity. And you really have to listen, for the notes are of little use in identifying the songs; in fact, the liner is a model of non-information. And there is no great variety in the presentation.

Some reasonably amusing non-musical albums have come in. They may have happened along when I was in a good mood, for I enjoyed them. They may actually be funny. The rube approach may be heard in a recording of a nightclub act, **Homer and Jethro at the Country Club** (RCA Victor LPM-2181), which is corny at times, and quite sharp satire also. A more urban zaniness may be heard on **Bob and Ray on a Platter** (RCA LPM-2131); Bob and Ray are humorists of great sophistication whose stock in trade is biting the hand that feeds, namely radio and television. This is emphasized by the skit titled "Salute to Shoddy Showmanship". Humor with a rather mordant science fiction overtone may be heard on **Introspection IV** (Warner Brothers 1372), being a number of brief skits read by Johnny Gunn, who with author Frederic Brown wrote the little recitations on this album. Most of the stories have an O. Henry-ish twist.

For a change of pace I might mention a purely instrumental album by the wonderful Boston "Pops" Orchestra, which does **Music From Million Dollar Movies** (RCA Victor LM-2380), which is what it says it is, after a fashion. The films may have cost a million, but it doesn't follow that the music therefrom is worth a million—even if the Pops, under Arthur Fiedler, makes it sound as if it were. There

are some good things here, such as *Laura*, the *March of the Siamese Children* from "The King and I", *Gigi*, and such lesser outpourings as the *Warsaw Concerto*, the *Cornish Rhapsody* (both graced with the piano of Leo Litwin), *Around the World*, and Auric's *Song From Moulin Rouge*. If you are a film music fan you'd best investigate this album; you'll never hear your fare better played.

June Christy has come up with an album worth hearing, **Ballads for Night People** (Capitol T-1308), in which she is greatly assisted by the arrangements and conducting of Bob Cooper. Miss Christy does such standards as *Bewitched*, *My Ship*, and *Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me*. The album takes its title cue from a song by Fred Landesman and Tommy Wolf, *Night People* from "The Nervous Set". A very appealing song, affectingly done, has original music by Cooper; it is titled *I Had A Little Sorrow*, the lyric of which is "The Penitent", a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay. A very good song, indeed.

Miss Christy is also one of the entertainers who may be heard in **Road Show** (Capitol TBO-1327; two-record set), a recording made at Purdue University. The orchestra is Stan Kenton's (which, whatever you think of it, is always interesting

whether or not he plays the True Jazz), and besides Miss Christy, the Crew Cuts may be heard singing. The album is lavishly produced—pictures and all that—and the program is presented as it was live, complete with applause, announcements, etc. Some good songs are heard, as well as some exciting, brassy, playing.

If you prefer the more sedate, how about an album of songs from **The Sound of Music** as sung by members of the original Trapp Family Singers (Warner Brothers 81377)? The vocalizing is what is to be expected; your getting the album will depend on how much you're enamored of the Rodgers and Hammerstein score and how you feel about hearing the Trapps sing the songs. It is a fairly interesting idea.

An album I've found quite beguiling is **Brass and Bamboo** (Capitol T-1345) which features orchestrations and conducting by the California musician, Tak Shindo. Blended into the conventional popular orchestra are such exotic instruments as the koto, Kabuki drums, and bamboo flutes. The effect is piquant, and often brilliant. Among the songs treated to this unusual instrumental setting are *Poinciana*, *Bali Ha'i* and *The Lamp Is Low*. The idea isn't especially new, of course, but it is extremely well done. —E.J.

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Stereotape Reviews

More About Crosstalk

PREVIOUS comments on crosstalk in quarter-track tapes (see the February, 1960, A.R.G.) engendered a number of comments inferring that the vertical alignment of my quarter-track playback head was something other than optimum. Those readers who did express or did entertain such doubts will be reassured to know that I myself had similar suspicions when I first noticed this crosstalk problem and had the deck I use for quarter-track playback (a Viking 85) checked by a competent service organization specializing in the maintenance of magnetic recording equipment. No fault could be found with the deck or with the vertical alignment of its quarter-track playback head.

One of the letters received was from Bill Muster, Marketing Manager for United Stereo Tapes (the firm processing and releasing these quarter-track tapings), who pointed out that this crosstalk, primarily a low-frequency phenomenon, is a characteristic of the playback heads and not the tape itself. In other words, the four magnetic tracks on the tape are completely separate—the magnetic pattern of

the oxide in one track does not influence or is not itself influenced by that of any of the other tracks on the tape.

All this is very well and good, but the fact remains that we must drag this four-track tape across a playback head which must sort out and reject the appropriate tracks and which cannot always completely tell which track is which. More specifically, the head gaps respond to varying magnetic flux fields (created by the moving magnetized tape) which come near the gap; evidently adjacent channels on these quarter-track tapes are just too "near" to the playback head to induce no or negligible current in the head—hence crosstalk.

Happily, Mr. Muster claims that this problem is now licked—probably a matter of better shielding, etc.—and apparently improved heads that eliminate crosstalk once and for all will be available shortly.

Until then, let me repeat that this one annoying bug in four-track tape reproduction is present only for a *very small portion of the playing time*. For about 95 per cent of the time, the crosstalk just doesn't exist because it is completely masked out by the sound on the "side" of the tape being played.

—P.C.P.

BARTÓK: *String Quartet No. 3; String Quartet No. 4; Fine Arts Quartet* (Leonard Sorkin, violin; Irving Ilmer, viola; Abram Loft, violin; George Sopkin, cello). Four-Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Concertapes 4T-5004, \$8.95.

THE complete set of Bartók String Quartet recordings from which these excellent performances are taken was reviewed extensively by Jack Diether in the June, 1959, ARG. The engineering of this tape version provides startlingly realistic sound which does much to delineate the many unusual string effects Bartók demands. Crosstalk is noticeable only during

the breaks and rests in the music. In all, a superb tape.

—P.C.P.

BERLIOZ: *Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14; Paris Conservatoire Orchestra* conducted by Ataúlfo Argenta. Four-Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London LCL-80012, \$7.95.

TARGENTA'S sensitive and generally workmanlike performance, reviewed in the November, 1958, issue, is greatly aided by London's glorious tape sonics. Superb definition and extremely clear, true-to-life instrumental timbres combined with a fair degree of spaciousness all make this one of the most impressive of four-track tapings

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to date. Praise be, even crosstalk is minimal. Highly recommended. P.C.P.

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FRANCK: *Symphony in D minor*; Graz Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Wolf. Four-Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Livingston 4T-8, \$8.95.

◻**MOODY** and rather listless, this performance is far less impassioned than it could be. Although hampered by this reserve, the playing is certainly aided by the rich, reverberant sonics which, except for a few grainy-sounding spots, are quite excellent. —P.C.P.

•
GROFÉ: *Grand Canyon Suite*; Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Oivind Fjeldstad. Four-Track 3¾ ips. Stereo Tape Cartridge, SMS C-21, \$6.95.

◻**FJELDSTAD'S** rather somber view of *Grand Canyon* was discussed recently (see the April, 1960, ARG) in its four-track 7½ ips. tape form. By comparison, this cartridge tape release (3¾ ips.) loses so little in sound quality that these versions can be considered, for all practical purposes, equivalent. True, there's just a little more hiss in the cartridge tape playback and one has to boost the treble slightly to compensate for a droop in the cartridge high end, but I'd hate to have to tell which is which in anything but a direct A-B comparison, section for section. —P.C.P.

•
PUCCINI: "*Madama Butterfly*" (Highlights); Renata Tebaldi (Cio-Cio-San); Carlo Bergonzi (B. F. Pinkerton); Fiorenze Cossotto (Suzuki); Enzo Sordello (Sharpless); Angelo Mercuriali (Goro); Chorus and Orchestra of L'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, conducted by Tullio Serafin. Four-

Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London LOL-90013, \$7.95.

◻**THE** "quite satisfactory" performance from which these excerpts were taken was reviewed by P. L. M. in the August, 1959, ARG. Contained here are the Pinkerton-Sharpless duet, Entrance of Butterfly, and Love Duet from Act I; *Un bel di* and the Flower Duet from Act II; the Sharpless, Pinkerton, Suzuki trio *Io so che alli*, Pinkerton's Farewell, and Death of Butterfly from Act III. Throughout, London's sound is gloriously effortless, with a good sense of space and direction relative to the stage action. —P.C.P.

•
TCHAIKOVSKY: *1812 Overture* (Op. 49); *Capriccio Italien* (Op. 45); London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kenneth Alwyn and the Band of the Grenadier Guards. Four-Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London LCL-80019, \$7.95.

◻**LIVING** up to all expectations, "London sound" on tape is truly marvelous. These two old faithfuls, given fine performances here (see p. 634 in the May, 1959, ARG), are certainly well suited for showing off excellent engineering, and this is precisely what they do in this tape. The only fault to be found is a very small amount of crosstalk—mostly lows—carried over from the house-shaking tail end of the *1812* to the beginning of the *Capriccio Italien* side and really only noticeable in softer moments and rests in these first few minutes of the *Capriccio*. —P.C.P.

•
Music for Trumpet and Orchestra—

HAYDN: *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra in E flat*; **VIVALDI:** *Concerto for Two Trumpets and Orchestra in C*; **PURCELL:** *Tune and Air for Trumpet and Orchestra in D*; *Voluntary for Two*

Trumpets in C; Trumpet Voluntary in D; Sonata for Trumpet and Strings in D; Roger Voisin (trumpet); Armando Ghitalla (trumpet); Unicorn Concert Orchestra conducted by Harry Ellis Dickson. Four-Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Kapp KT-49000, \$7.95.

ALTHOUGH the orchestral playing is rather lackluster, these performances are quite satisfactory. The tape sound, in contrast to I.K.'s findings in his September, 1958, review of the mono disc version, is really glorious; the trumpets are anything but raucous in tone as they were on the record. Only a slight amount of crosstalk mars the engineering here. —P.C.P.

Leon Bibb Sings Folk Songs: Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Milt Okun; Fred Hellerman (guitar). Four-Track 3¾ ips. Stereo Tape Cartridge, SMS C1, \$6.95.

WHEN I saw the phrase "with Chorus and Orchestra" on the carton for this tape, I was expecting some rather hammy, trashed-up Hollywood-style arrangements.

Such is not the case, however, for matters are handled here in very good taste; proper restraint has been exercised to retain the expressive simplicity of the original folk melodies. Included here are *Sinner Man, Turtle Dove, Rocks and Gravel, Poor Loretta, Look Over Yonder, Red Rosy Bush, and Take This Hammer*. Bibb sings with a light-voiced warmth which is most effective. The sonics exhibit a certain amount of distortion, surprisingly, and the reverberance sounds artificial. —P.C.P.

Flower Drum Song (excerpts); soloists, chorus, and orchestra under the direction of Jimmy Carroll. Four-Track 3¾ ips. Stereo Tape Cartridge, SMS C2, \$6.95.

Redhead (excerpts); Hill Bowen and his Orchestra; Rita Williams, Bryan Johnson, Fred Lucas (soloists); chorus under the direction of Mike Sammes. Four Track 3¾ ips. Stereo Tape Cartridge, SMS C-22, \$6.95.

MOST of the highlights from these two Broadway hits (e.g., *100 Million Miracles, I Enjoy Being a Girl, Chop Suey* from

"Flower Drum Song" and *The Right Finger of My Left Hand, Look Who's in Love, and Just for Once* from "Redhead") are presented on this pair of cartridge tapes. By far the better of these two releases is the "Redhead" one. The "Flower Drum Song" performances are generally dull and disinterested-sounding, while the sonics on this tape are seriously distorted in several different spots. The "Redhead" selections, on the other hand, are done with apparent enthusiasm and sparkle, while the sound is quite commendable—largely close-in and dry, but clean. On both tapes crosstalk is virtually nonexistent. —P.C.P.

Mantovani Film Encores; Mantovani and his Orchestra. Four-Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, London LPK-70003, \$11.95.

THE sweetness here is just too sticky for my taste. There are many, though, who are wild about Mantovani; for them this tape can be highly recommended. There's lots of music here—well over an hour—all gushy and super-smooth arrangements of film tunes like *My Foolish Heart, Unchained Melody, Three Coins in the Fountain, Love Is a Many Splendored Thing, High Noon, September Song, The High and the Mighty, Tammy, and Around the World*. The sound is London's best, which is to say superlative. —P.C.P.

Smash Flops; *A Collection of Ill-Timed Songs as sung by The Characters*. Four-Track 7½ ips. Monophonic(!) Tape, Omegatape MT-811, \$4.95.

FROM the Virgil Partch cartoon on the carton face to the last song on the tape, this release features hilariously ghoulish irreverence. Titles included are *Congratulations, Tom Dewey; When the Hindenburg Lands Today; Good Job, Well Done, Neville Chamberlain; and Bon Voyage, Titanic*. While the humor here—in the music as well as the texts—might wear off after repeated hearings, the first time through is sure to produce howls of laughter. It did for my wife and me, anyway. The sound is a bit on the rough side; it is touted on the carton as four-track 7½ ips. monophonic. A strange breed, indeed. —P.C.P.

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THE MONTH'S JAZZ

The responsibility for this column is divided between Martin Williams and Joe Goldberg.

Lena Horne: *Songs by Burke and Van Heusen.* Victor LPM-1895, \$3.98.

▲IT could be argued that this column is not the proper place to discuss this album, but Miss Ella Fitzgerald's losing struggles with the sophistication of Lorenz Hart and Cole Porter were widely acclaimed in most jazz magazines, so never mind. Miss Horne is, or was, in possession of a magnificent jazz instrument—some of her performances with bass fiddle alone could only have been brought off by a jazz vocalist—which has unfortunately become subservient to an array of sexy supper-club mannerisms that constitute most of her present style. The song is always made to conform to the mannerisms, never the reverse.

The songs on this album vary from indifferent to wonderful. There is an aura about many of them of attempting to be better and more significant than they actually are, but those that fully achieve what they set out to do—*Like Someone in Love*, *It Could Happen to You*, *Polkadots and Moonbeams*—are unsurpassable. (Mr. Burke and Mr. Van Heusen are presently in the position of court composers to Frank Sinatra, for whom they can turn out a gem like *Here Comes That Rainy Day*.) It is indicative of Miss Horne's present predicament as a singer that the indifferent type of song that gets least in her way, like *Get Rid of Monday*, brings forth her best performance. It must be said, in all justice, that Lennie Hayton's orchestra, with arrangements by Ralph Burns and Mr. Hayton, don't help much. But if Miss Horne, with her jazz sense and particular kind of sophistication, were to make an album of Duke Ellington's music under the direction of the composer, you would really have something. —J.G.

●
Miles Davis: *Workin' With the Miles Davis Quintet.* Prestige 7166, \$4.98.

▲ONE of the minor mysteries of modern jazz is the quintet that Miles Davis led from late 1955 until spring of 1957. It included the groping, unformed, often out-of-tune tenor sax of John Coltrane; a better-than-average cocktail pianist named Red Garland; Paul Chambers, a bass player scarcely out of his teens; the frenetic Roach-based drumming of Philly

Joe Jones, and the lyric trumpet of Miles himself. The mystery is, by what alchemy, using a book made up of standards, Charlie Parker tunes, blues, and a few special oddies, and employing a rhythmic concept formed by another cocktail pianist, Ahmad Jahmal, such disparate elements were formed into a band. They were, though, into a very exciting band, and I cannot come closer to the solution than to suggest that it is a matter of the personality of the leader. Today, three and a half years after its disbanding, every member of that group except Garland could lay serious claim to being top man on his instrument. None, with the possible exception of Davis, could have done so at the time.

But when you are dealing with such intangibles, you are always very close to the danger line. If the control slackens ever so slightly, the divergent elements return to their original state, five rather ill-assorted men who happen to be playing together. Unfortunately, that happens on much of this record. It is the third in a series of one-take performances the quintet made in 1957 ("Cookin'" and "Relaxin'" are the others), and it is inferior to its predecessors. Coltrane is far from at his best, he is fumbling much of the time, and his start on *Trane's Blues* is embarrassing (this tune, under the title of *Vierd Blues*, and Brubeck's *In Your Own Sweet Way*, which also appears here, were both recorded previously by Miles and Sonny Rollins, in much better performances). Perhaps Prestige started with the best of the lot, and is now barrel-scraping. But no one could have been completely successful at the one-take marathon these men attempted. —J.G.

●
John Lewis: *Improved Meditations and Excursions.* Atlantic 1313, \$4.98.

▲THE current critical attitude toward John Lewis, as exemplified by the liner notes for his Atlantic albums, has increasingly attempted to dictate the frame of reference in which we are to view his output. (On another level, the work of Albert Camus, who is even more the saint of his artistic area than Lewis is of his, is treated in the same way: such-and-such a play is not really a play, but a philoso-

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phical treatise; this short story cannot be judged without reference to another work.) Horst Lippman's notes for the record read in part: "There was certainly no thought of producing something world-shaking, something that would be an event in music history. Many of the pieces are, in fact, rather like modest studies, lightly sketched and preserved on tape for future development. Hence the title, 'Improvised Meditations and Excursions.'"

Lewis is too much a craftsman ever to offer less than his best work, and no apologies need be made for this session. Working with MJQ drummer Connie Kay and bassist Percy Heath (George Duviol replaces Heath on four of the seven numbers), Lewis presents standards by Gershwin, Kern and Weill, a Charlie Parker blues, and two of his own compositions (the piece called *Love Me is Venice* from his score for "No Sun in Venice"). The pieces are delicate cameos, possessing a structural sense and compression that have, with much justice, caused his work to be compared to the *Mikrokosmos* of Béla Bartók. The emotional climate is always one of the pastoral serenity and the work, for me, evokes more intellectual interest than emotional reaction. If any one piece can be singled out for praise in a generally praiseworthy set, it is Parker's *Now's the Time*. On this, as to a lesser degree, the essence of Lewis, work comes through: the piano stripped to its essentials, played as a medium for the conveyance of certain well-formulated ideas never for its own sake.

—J.G.

●
Count Basie: *Basie's Basement*. RCA Camden CAL-497, \$1.98.

Jimmy Rushing: *Rushing Lullabies*. Columbia CL-1401, \$3.98.

▲PERHAPS I have no acceptable musical reason for it, but I have never been able to get a thrill out of big-band section work. One soloist is almost always preferable. In the same way, I love to watch a single dancer, but the Rockettes leave me cold. And so, for whatever reason, I have always been bored by the big-band riff style, which is essentially an elaboration of simple figures that began by being played by one man. It follows, then, that the Basie band, whose style is the riff, pure and simple, would move me much less than the Ellington band, whose scores benefit from the variety that has been placed in them by our finest jazz composer. And even the Ellington band, in its 1940s swing period, began to pale on me. So, for me, the main points of interest on this Basie album are the moments when the band (the band of 1947, except for one track) steps aside to let the finest

rhythm section of all time—Count Basie, Freddie Greene, Walter Page, and Jo Jones—take over. In those moments, the album is superb.

Jimmy Rushing sings on five of the tracks, and on the entire album recorded under his own name. His own LP, recorded just recently, features fine soloists—Ray Bryant, Jo Jones, Skeeter Best, Gene Ramey, Buddy Tate, and Sir Charles Thompson—playing the small-group Kansas City jazz that, in expanded version, forms one of Basie's strongest foundations. The opening number, *You Can't Run Around*, is just about perfect. It is taken at the slow, rocking tempo that has always been behind the best blues, and raises expectations for a truly superb album. Unfortunately, the first is the best on the LP. Nothing at all goes wrong elsewhere, except perhaps that Thompson's organ is a sometimes annoying intrusion, but the album proves that, without inspiration, nothing can be as dull as uniform excellence. Also, a long spell of Rushing's voice can be wearing. He has the shouting, joyful humor and arrogance of the blues in his voice, but not the sorrow. And certain regional aspects of his voice, such as excessively hard "r"s (or perhaps an attempt to overcome them), become irritating. The high point of the entire album, the first number included, is Ray Bryant's magnificent, striding solo entrance on *Good Rockin' Tonight*. If only he always played that well.

—J.G.

●
Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross: *The Hottest New Group in Jazz*. Columbia CL-1403, \$3.98.

▲THE subtitle of this album certainly must refer to popularity rather than musical quality. What this group does is to take famous instrumental solos, set lyrics to them (mostly by Jon Hendricks), and sing them. The earliest exponent of this practice that I can remember was King Pleasure, who had two hits in Charlie Parker's *Parker's Mood* and James Moody's *I'm in the Mood for Love*. Annie Ross, of this group, had an early hit as a single act with Wardell Gray's *Twisted*.

This makes the act essentially a freak act, on the fringe of music. Vocally, the group is of varying quality: Annie Ross is a fine jazz singer, Jon Hendricks could probably sing very good blues, and Dave Lambert emits a strange, tortured sound that can hardly be called singing at all. As for Mr. Hendricks' poetry, he seems (if he is a sincere poet, and not an opportunist) to believe any and all aspects of American mythology: vine-covered cottages, love will find a way, and at least one more, of which he is living proof: rags to riches.

—J.G.

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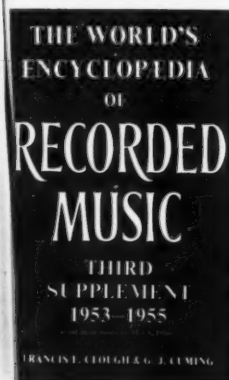
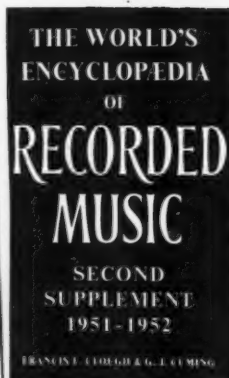
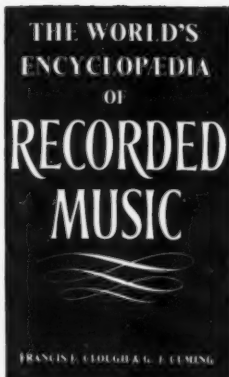
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